

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

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Arkansas Memories Project

Kirby Penick
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford
October 1, 2018
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Objective

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

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <https://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 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 and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing; and
 - 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 Kirby Penick on October 1, 2018, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: So—uh—Kirby Penick. You're facing Scott Lunsford here, and we're here on behalf of the Pryor Center. Uh—today's date's October 1, 2018. And—um—we're gonna do your interview today, at least get it started. I don't know if we'll finish it, but—um—first off, what's your full name?

Kirby Penick: Nathan Kirby Penick.

[00:00:30] SL: All right. And when and where were you born?

KP: I was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, St. John's Hospital—uh—September 6, 1940.

SL: You've had a birthday.

KP: Just recently.

SL: Yeah. What is that?

KP: It's seventy-eight.

SL: Seventy-eight. You're an old dude now. [*Laughs*]

KP: Who'd've thought?

SL: Who'd've thought? Yeah. So—um—did you spend—what about your parents' names? What were their names?

KP: Um—my father is Giles Albert Penick Jr.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: And my mother was Katherine Putnam Penick.

SL: And were they both from Tulsa? Or . . .

KP: No—uh—my mother—uh—is from a little town in southwest Oklahoma—uh—Carnegie.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: And my dad was from Tulsa.

[00:01:31] SL: Um—so do you have any idea how they met?

KP: I think they met at the University of Oklahoma.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: It's where—uh—they both—my dad initially went to the University of Virginia, and then he—uh—finished up, I think—uh—his law degree at the University of Oklahoma. I don't—and he might've been there—uh—prior to that a little bit, but—uh—that's where I understand they met.

SL: So he got his undergraduate degree at Virginia, or maybe not.

KP: Yeah, I th—yeah. Uh—actually I think—I'm not positive enough to—uh—you know, I hate to—to give you information that I'm not absolutely positive about.

SL: Yeah, that's all right.

KP: But I think—uh—he went off to school in Virginia in about—uh—maybe when the Depression was coming along.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: My family, I think, was—uh—they were pretty—uh—successful people.

SL: Right.

KP: And—uh—the girls—he had three sisters, and the girls went to women's schools back then, private schools. And—uh—my dad went to the University of Virginia. But I think maybe—uh—due to the Depression, after two or three years they might've—uh—run out of—uh . . .

SL: Like everyone else. Yeah.

KP: . . . the means to—uh—continue there, and I think maybe that's when he came back to the University of Oklahoma, perhaps finished up there, and went to law school there.

[00:03:24] SL: So did you ever get to meet his mom and dad?

KP: My grandparents?

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: Well, my grandmother died—uh—before I was born.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: My grandfather was a doctor in Carnegie, Oklahoma, and I got to meet him, and—uh—my brothers and I would go over there in the summertime. It was—uh—wonderful. Uh—kind of like a Western movie over there. Uh—Indians and horses and—uh—it was really a small, little town but—and he got—you know, being

the doctor who—you know, he knew everyone, and everyone knew him and . . .

SL: Now is that your—on your mother's side?

KP: That's my maternal grandfather. Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:04:11] KP: My dad's father—uh—he was around when I was very young, but he died—I think he died of a heart attack, maybe, when I was, oh, I don't know, six years old or seven maybe, in there.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: Uh—and beca—and my mother also died when I was young.

SL: Hmm.

KP: Uh—as fro—as result of she was in a bad car wreck . . .

SL: Oh.

KP: . . . and—uh—wasn't killed instantly, but she died of her injuries, too.

SL: Right.

KP: So when we were young and in Tulsa—uh—we—I went to the se—through the second grade, I believe, at Lee School right there in Tulsa.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: And then after all of that, the consequences of my mom and my

grandfather, my dad's father—uh—my grandmother had two sisters who lived here in Fayetteville.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: One on Lafayette Street and one on Spring Street.

SL: Yeah.

[00:05:28] KP: And another on—uh—right across on—uh—Maple Street right by Washington School. So they took—they brought—uh—my dad brought my brothers and I over here. Uh—this is kind of a [*laughs*], you know—uh—involved, but—uh—my—his sister—uh—Julie Perry—uh—was married to a guy named Bill Perry. They were from Washington, DC.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: And he suffered terr—some bad wounds in the Second World War out there in the Pacific.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: He was in the Marine Corps and—uh—was—had—uh—as a consequence, he never made it—uh—he got back, but—uh—he was pretty—in pretty bad shape. The upshot of all that was that my dad moved me and my two brothers and his sister and—Julie and her child, Julie—uh—over here, and my grandmother over to Fayetteville. They bought a house over on Washington Street, and we set up housekeeping. That was—be four kids, my aunt,

who was the—kind of the—uh—mother or the—you know, and my grandmother, who was the dowager or the—you know.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: And we had a big house there on Washington, and that's where we grew up. I remember it was—uh—uh—I think I was in the second grade when I got over here, so—and that's where I started. Went through the Lee—uh—Washington School.

SL: Mm-hmm. Uh-huh.

KP: And—uh—on through the junior high and high school and university, and I attended—uh—law school up there in—uh—at Fayetteville for . . .

SL: So . . .

KP: . . . two years.

[00:07:37] SL: What was it that your—your dad's father did for a living?

KP: They were—uh—my grandfather wa—came out from Virginia to—uh—he was a lawyer, and he was—uh—involved in establishing, I believe, the headrights for the Indians who had—they—uh—that was—uh—oil. They had—uh—you know, oil discoveries back then.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: They called Tulsa the Oil Capital of the World. Some of the—

uh—Gettys, the—uh—Phillips 66 brothers, the—uh—all the big—
uh—later-to-be-big oil people were there, around there in
Fayette—in Tulsa.

SL: Mm-hmm.

[00:08:28] KP: And he was—uh—working on the headrights for the
Indians. Indians didn't own property separately and individually.
They own—the pr—the tribe owned the land, and those members
of the tribe—uh—they shared in the oil revenues—uh—by what
they called a headright. You established your bona fides in the
tribe that you were in, and then you were set up with a certain
percentage of—uh—what the revenue was from the oil on Indian
lands. And oil and gas, I suppose, too. And—uh—that's how he
got started out in this country, I believe. And then he—uh—got
into the oil business himself, just as an individual. And he had a
couple of small independent oil—uh—companies—uh—and my
dad later went in business with him, and that's—and my dad was
a lawyer as well, and so that's—was the family business. Uh—
they—we as—uh—that was how we made our living.

SL: That's how they started and all.

KP: Uh-huh.

[00:10:00] SL: So—um—well, let's talk about your mom's side of
the family a little bit. So they were from Carnegie, and that—

when you got to go there . . .

KP: Well . . .

SL: . . . it was kind of like the Wild West a little bit, and it . . .

KP: Oh, yeah. People riding horses down the street, and Indians, the people talking in—uh—the—uh—there were Kiowas, Apaches, all the kinds of—uh—tribe was down there. It was nor—just north of—uh—Fort Sill, Lawton and that area down there.

SL: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

KP: Beautiful mountains like you would see in a John Wayne movie or something.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And—uh—these Indians sitting on the benches down on the street—uh—the main street of Carnegie with—some with blankets. Lady—women with—uh—those—uh . . .

SL: Serapes, kind of? Yeah.

KP: Yeah, kind of, but—uh—but, you know, those kinds.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And talking in those languages that were just, I mean, fascinating. It was—uh—very exotic.

[00:11:05] SL: So you would've been—uh—as a child. Let's see.

You were born in [19]40, 1940.

KP: Mm-hmm.

SL: So—um—you got to be—uh—down there probably when you were just in kindergarten or started to . . .

KP: Yeah, my—uh—we got to go down there. We left Tulsa on a train . . .

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: . . . to Oklahoma City, and there—my grandfather would drive up and pick us up and take us back to Carnegie. And we would spend maybe a month or more down there with him. We loved it and, you know, running around. It was . . .

[00:11:44] SL: It's interesting that your mom was from there and—
but your dad—uh—set it up to where—uh—the tribes would get their share of the oil too. It's—uh . . .

KP: Well, my dad wasn't—uh—involved.

SL: Or I mean your grandfather.

KP: Yeah. My grandfather.

SL: Yeah.

KP: My grandfather was—uh—primarily up around—uh—uh—Muskogee, you know, where the Cherokees . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: . . . are and—uh—up in that country. And that was where the big play in the oil business was at that time.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: And they—and—uh—so that was wi—uh—I don't think we ever had much in the way of oil business until later. My grandfather—uh—subsequently wound up with—uh—some land, mostly farmland.

SL: Mm-hmm.

[00:12:40] KP: And down in there, and they subsequently found some oil on some of those lands as well. But my—my grandfather didn't have anything to do with that . . .

SL: Oh.

KP: . . . particular part of it. He wasn't—they were just dealing with the people up there in—uh—Tulsa County and down around Muskogee and then up—uh—north of there but on the east . . .

SL: On the east half of Oklahoma.

KP: . . . s—side of Oklahoma.

SL: Yeah. So . . .

KP: Mm-hmm. There were some—that was big—uh—you know, it was like they say . . .

SL: Big doings.

KP: . . . the Oil Capital of the World, they called it.

SL: Yeah.

KP: It was. But it was—it was—uh—a big lot of . . .

[00:13:22] SL: So how old were when you—uh—moved to Fayetteville?

KP: I guess I was—uh—what'd it be? Six, seven—maybe eight years old.

SL: Ah.

KP: Uh—was in the second grade, I believe, or so it was seven or eight.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: Somewhere in there. And—uh—then so . . .

SL: So you're all living on Washington Avenue.

KP: Uh-huh. 409 Washington.

SL: And going to Washington Elementary grade school.

[00:13:45] KP: Yeah. And then we were—I went over to—uh—the—they had just—I think I was in the first class to go through the old high school, which they turned into a junior high school.

SL: Right.

KP: And then they had built—they built the high school where it is now, and that's where I went to high school.

SL: At the new high or the newer high school.

KP: Uh-huh. The newer high, we went to the . . .

SL: Yeah. Um . . .

KP: On School Street . . .

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: . . . was where, I think, pretty much where that old folks or the high rise . . .

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: . . . right there on School and—what is that? One of those wester—uh—Mountain Street.

SL: Mountain. Yeah.

KP: Right, you know, where it came down through there, but that's—that's gone now. But . . .

[00:14:29] SL: So when I was in Washington Elementary grade school, the lunchroom was in the basement.

KP: Mm-hmm.

SL: Is that the way it was for you too?

KP: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. And you took the stairs out of the basement out on to the playground?

KP: Uh-huh.

SL: Yeah. I mean, it was—uh—I was there before they started adding on to the school, so I bet we had the same sort of big portrait of President Washington in the hallway.

KP: Uh-huh. Along with Virgil Blossom.

SL: Virgil Blossom. Yeah, yeah.

KP: And—uh—he had a daughter, Gail.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: They lived right across the street from the—uh—school.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: And I can remember Gail used to threaten me, saying, "I'm gonna get my dad to kick you out of this school if [*laughing*] you don't quit pulling my pigtails," or, you know, whatever that, you know, she would ha . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . whatever kind of—uh—problems she was having with me.

SL: I got to work with her for—um—several years.

KP: Yeah.

[00:15:28] SL: She ended up being—um—um—uh—you know, the right-hand person of the chancellor of the—of the university up there when we were doing all those events.

KP: Uh-huh.

SL: It was neat. Yeah. She was always good to me.

KP: Yeah, I liked her too.

SL: Yeah.

KP: But you know, I was teasing the girls back then. I don't know if that . . .

SL: Where'd you learn to do that? [*Laughs*]

KP: What?

SL: Tease the girls.

KP: Just a—uh—just a natural—I was always—uh—I guess I wasn't—
uh—a serious student. I was a kid, and I was playing and
having fun rather than . . .

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: And it's always been that way. I, you know, laugh and laugh.

[00:16:16] SL: Let's talk about the house on Washington. Um—it
had indoor plumbing, of course.

KP: [*Laughs*] Yeah, we did.

SL: Well, I mean, lots of folks I interview . . .

KP: Uh-huh. But we did have a big—uh—boiler in the basement . . .

SL: For the heat.

KP: . . . for the heat.

SL: Yeah. We had that, too, and a coal chute. We had coal chute.

KP: They did—uh—we did a coal chute, but nobody used coal back—I
think they had converted to . . .

SL: Into gas.

KP: . . . coal oil or something or whatever.

SL: Or gas. Right. Yeah, yeah.

KP: Uh—gas by then but—to run all that.

SL: Yeah.

KP: But there was a chute . . .

SL: Yeah. Were there . . .

KP: . . . coming in the side.

SL: Yeah, I still have a chute in our hou . . .

KP: Oh, yeah. It was pl—you know, we'd slide down that and hide out. [*SL laughs*] It was—and we had a big barn in the backyard there . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: . . . uh—which was a great clubhouse and general—uh—wonderful place to play.

[00:17:06] SL: So—um—were there any—uh—musical instruments in the house?

KP: There always were. My grandmother was an accomplished piano player, and we always had a piano.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: And my father was—could play about anything. He had the gift of—uh—for instance, he had a guitar that he could go, "La-la-la, la-la-la," and figure out something that's—that wasn't notated but—and he would—he could play—uh—find minor chords and keys and stuff. He was—uh—really . . .

SL: He had an ear.

KP: Yeah. Uh-huh. And we were singers all—you know, a house full

of—we had a quartet, at least my dad and my three brothers. We sang together all my life. It was wonderful. I can remember going to my aunt and uncle—uh—maybe—I forget. It was—whether it was a anni—twenty-fifth, fiftieth anni—uh—you know, anniversary, and we did a se—number over there. Uh—went over to Oklahoma to Lawton there. My uncle was—uh—a career army guy. And—uh—I can remember at the banquet and dance that they were having, my dad, my two brothers, and I got up and sang—uh—did a number for 'em. It was so much fun.

SL: Live performance.

KP: Oh yeah.

SL: Yeah. So . . .

[00:18:51] KP: And I was a—uh—also there at Washington, they had a what they would call an operetta or—and we would do a lot of—uh—Steven Foster kind of a play like . . .

SL: Musicals.

KP: . . . and—with all those songs.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: And I was always—uh—singing in that.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: I—we joined the St. Paul's Episcopal Church when I came here, and I was a member of their choir. We had a—uh—lady—uh—

Mrs. Lindloff. Uh—Marius Lindloff was the rector, the, you know, the priest or whatever.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: And his wife was a trained opera singer, and she was in—uh—in charge of the choir. So I had some—uh—we had music.

SL: And some players.

KP: Both—uh—just formal and informal. I took about six years of piano lessons.

SL: Mm-hmm.

KP: Uh—I might've got about three year's worth of—uh . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Talent.

KP: . . . good out—well, I, you know, I wouldn't practice.

SL: Right.

KP: Playing ball and swimming and doing ev—you know, everything that kids are doing. And I can remember when my dad died years later—he kept files on all of us kids.

SL: Oh.

KP: And—uh—in my file, there was a note from this piano teacher apologizing for my dad—to my dad for—uh—me taking money—oh, it must—I doubt it was five dollars a month . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . or, you know, something very small.

SL: Uh-huh.

KP: And she would apologize saying, "I shouldn't be charging this 'cause—uh—Kirby is not practicing [*laughs*] very much, and he's not, you know, moving along" . . .

SL: Along, yeah.

KP: . . . "as fast as he might if [*SL laughs*] he would take it a little se—more serious." But . . .

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:50] SL: So what about religion in the home? Did y'all have a—you do any Bible study, or did you have a Bible in the house?

KP: Oh yeah. Everybody had Bibles. But we were not—we weren't—we were Episcopalians.

SL: Right. [*Laughter*]

KP: Enough said, you know. They were like Catholics. It was a more of a formal, high-church Episcopal church.

SL: Right.

KP: But they were much more worldly, I would say . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . than the Catholics, for instance. And but it was—peo . . .

SL: But you would go to . . .

KP: . . . people wore vestments—oh yeah, I went every . . .

SL: You'd go to church.

KP: . . . Sunday. Went to church camp every summer down at Camp Mitchell down on Petit Jean Mountain and also went to all these youth convocations. We partnered with Fort Smith, the St. John's church down there. And they called it the Young Churchmen, and we were involved in that always. Up—I was an acolyte, and served into—I was up at the university still having to get up and show up down there at eight o'clock for communion.

SL: Right.

KP: And but it was a big, you know, a big part of growing up. It was . . .

SL: So . . .

KP: But not so much the sec—the intense religious part of it, although . . .

SL: Not evangelical.

KP: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Right.

KP: We weren't too much for that.

[00:22:39] SL: So was grace said at the table at meals?

KP: Oh yeah. Yeah, we ate—it was kind of unusual, and none of my friends seemed to do this, but we had a pretty formal—when we ate, everybody sat down at the table. The food was appar—

prepared in the kitchen, put onto plates, and brought out and served like you would see it in a restaurant or something. And then there was more if you needed it but—and it was a place where—we probably got as much instruction at the dinner table as we did anywhere else. That was a time for the kids learning manners, for instance. Not only table manners but the—you know, like you would see in a book of etiquette. You—I can remember we'd go around the table, and they would say, "Kirby, introduce your brothers and all the kids to the adults," and there was a way, a proper way, to present younger people to older people. And it was pretty structured. You got up whenever a woman or a older adult would come in a room. And it was—seemed kind of arcane, maybe, a little bit back in those days, but that was some of the most valuable lessons that you learn. If you learn how to do these things properly, you never feel uncomfortable doing 'em, and you always know how to act in public. And so that was a very valuable thing to learn at that early age.

[00:24:41] SL: Did your aunt prepare all the meals?

KP: She had some help fro—later, but at first she did. We—I remember we had this great big Chambers stove and all these cast iron cooks. And she was a good cook. And we ate, you

know, things that I'd never had before. And . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Like what?

KP: Well, I don't know. Have you ever eaten a tongue? Or . . .

SL: No, but Hayden McIlroy talks about it. Boiled tongue that he'd seen before.

KP: Yeah. It was a disgusting-looking thing. [*SL laughs*] And they served it cold a lot of times on sandwiches with horseradish and—like pumpernickel bread, you know, something like that.

SL: Yeah.

[00:25:34] KP: But we had to eat everything that was prepared, and there wasn't any, you know, I didn't like this so I didn't have to eat it. I had—you learn to eat everything, and I learned to like most all of it.

SL: Right.

KP: It was—and so I never was a picky or—and none of us were. We were, you know.

SL: So there were—it was pretty much formal schedule of when the meal would be prepared . . .

KP: Yeah. Dinner.

SL: . . . and you expected to be in place.

KP: And Sunday dinners was a special--we had a big dining room with a lot of big sideboards and fine china and crystal and stuff

that came out at some—at special occasions. But we had a pretty formal—that was—dinner was always when som—everybody had to show up. You didn't come in there . . .

SL: Late and . . .

KP: You had to dress, you know, not formally but appropriately.

SL: Clean clothes.

KP: And you know—[*laughter*] yeah.

SL: If you've been rolling around in the dirt.

KP: Kick the—yeah, put shoes on and all that sort of thing.

SL: Right. Right, right.

KP: Shirts.

SL: So . . .

KP: No shirt, no service.

[00:26:51] SL: Did I hear you say that the preacher or the rector of the church was a female at the time?

KP: No.

SL: Oh.

KP: That was Marius Lindloff.

SL: Oh, Marius.

KP: And he was a very—they were from off somewhere up north, I think. But he was a, I mean, imposing figure, and he looked like the Pope almo—you know, they wear those vestments. And he

was born to it like—he would've made a good stage priest or something like that 'cause he was very imposing. Not in a bad way, but you know, a . . .

SL: So did y'all have him over for dinner at hi—ever?

KP: No, we didn't. That wasn't a big part of the church. People, you know . . .

SL: Right.

KP: And I know what you mean.

SL: Yeah.

[00:26:47] KP: You know, a lot of churches, especially the Baptists and the Methodists and things like that, I think they do entertain.

SL: Yeah.

KP: But and back in the day, of course, those preachers and priests didn't make much money, so you had 'em over to feed 'em. I mean, you know, I can remember reading about that later that—but no. But we were—we knew him, and he was—like I can remember him driving us down to summer camp and back, and we saw him—and I was an acolyte, so I was in contact with him all the time. He—I was, course, baptized and confirmed and married in that Episcopal church. And so I was alway—yeah, it was a big part of my life for sure.

SL: Is that—that's the same Episcopal church that's there now.

KP: Yeah, St. Paul's.

SL: It's a beautiful, beautiful church.

KP: Yeah, it is lovely.

[00:28:48] SL: So back to—I assume that you had radio in the home.

KP: [*Laughs*] Yeah. It was a crystal set. No, radio, we—that was the big—course it's—it had been around for ma—you know, many, many years. Radio was the main—listen to . . .

SL: So would the family gather around the radio to hear a particular program?

KP: Some. Some. But we had more than one radio, you know. The kids would probably be up in their room and listen to the ballgame or something.

SL: Right.

KP: And the adults might be listening to a concert or something or news or whatever they did. But . . .

SL: I'm . . .

KP: . . . it was—that was big. Actually, it was—I think back on it now. It's almost better than TV because you don't have to watch a radio. You can listen to it. And a lot of women that I knew back then, our neighbors, for instance, right down the

street from our house, Rex Perkins . . .

SL: Perkins.

KP: . . . who was a prominent lawyer—his wife, Georgia, she was a big Cardinal fan. Most people were because you could get all of their games.

SL: St. Louis. Yeah. Right.

KP: And I'd go down there sometimes and lis—she had two daughters—and listen to ballgames with her. And she would sit there and sew or do, you know—you can do all of these things. You don't have to look at anything.

SL: Right.

KP: You just have to listen to it.

SL: Right.

[00:30:29] KP: And that was—that would've saved—as I think back, might've been a good thing for people to not have to devote—I'm going to—like now, we're gonna watch the Razorbacks play, for instance.

SL: Right.

KP: And there's nothing else going on 'cause you're watching that, and it's—takes up three hours or so.

SL: Right.

KP: Whereas before, you could listen to those games and be doing

something entirely unrelated to that, but listen to it and still get a lot. I mean, you weren't fiddling your time away.

SL: I remember my earliest memory of listening to the radio was the prize fights.

KP: Oh, they were great. Yeah.

SL: And my dad would give me his watch. It had a second hand on it, and I'd make sure that that bell rung when it was supposed to ring. *[Laughs]*

[00:31:24] KP: Yeah. Well, that was big. You know, fight—the fights were very popular back then. And actually they—there was a lot of boxing went on in Fayetteville down at the Legion hut and the Boys Club and all of those places. And on Friday nights, for instance, Gillette or Pabst Blue Ribbon or somebody sponsored those big fights. And everybody, you know, especially as we got a little older, would—that would be—you know, you'd know who was fighting and go somewhere. And later on when they'd put 'em on television, we'd go down, for instance, to Rogers Recreation or something and watch the fights, and everybody'd be down there betting on 'em and . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: It was a lot of, you know—interesting.

[00:32:18] SL: So you said there were a lot of fights locally that—at

the Boys Club and the Legion hut, and so were these all different ages that . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . were organized?

KP: Yeah, when the Boys Cl—yeah, especially after the Boys Club came in, they sponsored boxing and—for their kids. And I knew a bunch of 'em. My great uncle, Mr. Rhodes, was a fighter when he was a kid, and his son Bobby was a good fighter when—later on. He was like maybe a little bit younger than my dad. But you know, even back then. And so the family had a lot of knowledge and interest in boxing back then.

[00:33:16] SL: So but you never signed up?

KP: I did, and I didn't. I never got into it to the degree that some of—some of my best friends were very good and stayed with it. I was always doing more things than that, rather than—same with sports. I played all these different sports, but I wasn't dedicated enough to—I can remember some of those coaches coming down to the swimming pool to roust me out to go play on a Pony League baseball game or something . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . they, "You're supposed to be down there," and I'd be down there at City Park swimming and, you know, running around. So

it was just great.

SL: So that's Wilson Park, the City Park pool?

KP: Uh-huh.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Yeah. That was the only one we had.

SL: Yeah.

[00:34:23] KP: Big city pool. Everybody went down there I knew, and that's—you make a lot of friends. And of course, back in those days Fayetteville was so small. I dare say I might—I thought I knew everybody in town, you know, at—almost. You know, it wasn't that big, 7,000 or something . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . I don't know, maybe.

SL: Barbara remembers Ronnie Hawkins . . .

KP: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . being down there as a life guard.

KP: Yeah. He was a great diver, and he and Doug Douglas, I remember, was a—and there was all kinds of people. I don't know if you ever met Sloan Duvall. He was a guy that grew up here and la—left and he came back later on. But he and—there were a bunch of 'em and that were always—you know, and they were down there about every day [*SL laughs*] doing trick diving

and, you know, mostly interacting with the little girls and . . .

[00:35:27] SL: Yeah, I'd heard that Ronnie and Doug Douglas had a diving act that they developed.

KP: Ah, yeah, they were both—Doug was a good diver as well. And there was—there were, you know, a bunch of them that could dive. I could do, you know . . .

SL: I could do a cannonball. [*Laughs*]

KP: Yeah. I could do a gainer, maybe a half gainer . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . and jackknives and, you know, do flips and stuff, but I was never like Ronnie. He was a acrobat, almost. And I don't mean almost, he was, I guess. He could do a back flip when I was—when he was playing music.

SL: On the stage.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

KP: Who knew?

SL: The camel walk.

KP: The camel walk. I . . .

SL: That predates the moonwalk.

KP: Exactly.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Yeah, that was one of his specialties too. He was quite a character.

[00:36:25] SL: So I'm trying to think. I had another question about—oh, dinner and the prep. You said that your aunt later on had help. Tell me about the help around the house.

KP: Well, yeah. As my grandmother got older and she had to—we had—I think they call them practical nurse, maybe, or something like that, but this little lady in a white uniform like you would think . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . of a nurse, she was there taking care of my grandmother. And she would cook for us too. She—and there—we also had a maid. I'm trying to think of her name. Something . . .

SL: African American?

KP: Yeah. There at the—she was a sweetheart, and a—like a, you know—kept house and cooked . . .

SL: Yeah, there were . . .

KP: . . . for us, too.

SL: There was kind of a . . .

KP: Not all the time, but, you know.

SL: There was kind of a core of African American community, that really never left Fayetteville, I mean, they . . .

KP: It was kind of—it wasn't Loretta, but it was something, you know, Etta. Maybe something. I'll think of it maybe later. Sorry.

SL: Yeah. That's all right.

KP: But she was a dear . . .

[00:37:53] SL: So . . .

KP: . . . friend and . . .

SL: . . . were you assigned any chores around the house?

KP: [*Laughs*] Are you kidding?

SL: No, I want to know. [*Laughs*]

KP: Well, everybody had chores . . .

SL: Okay.

KP: . . . you know.

SL: What were yours?

KP: Well, all the kids—well, you know, just unpaid labor.

SL: [*Laughs*] Yes. Well, you had a roof over your head. Clothes on your back.

KP: And I never said a word [*SL laughs*] to anybody about it. But we—the kids—for instance, we had quite a p—a few people at that dinner table every time. And every night, the kids—the oldest ones washed the dishes, the younger ones dried, and you know, like that. And we had to always—that was a chore that

we had every day. And then I worked—we had a big yard. My dad was an avid gardener. He was also—he built the beds back then. You could drive out on any road around Fayetteville. They used to grade the bar ditches, what they called, with a little grader. They would turn it up and run down the side of the ditches . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . to keep them clear.

SL: Right.

KP: And they turned up these flat rocks that Northwest Arkansas—you see them everywhere.

SL: Right.

[00:39:19] KP: And they—you could go out there and pick up those rocks for the taking. And my dad built patios, sidewalks, garden walls, and he had three boys, and we—you know, and then we—he started building rental property, buying up stuff, and he liked—he was kind of an amateur architect. He would see a picture and get somebody to draw up some plans for him and build a house, and that's—one of the big part of it was landscaping. And we built—he had those walls built, but we hauled all the rocks to get them built, but.

SL: Yeah. I helped my dad built a wall. And we'd go—we'd always

gather the rocks and the flowers and the plants on Sunday drives.

KP: Yeah.

SL: We'd get in the station wagon and go wherever, and we'd—they'd cook lunch on the side of the road . . .

KP: Ah.

SL: . . . you know.

[00:40:26] KP: Well, we—my dad, who never moved to Fayetteville—he was an attorney all his life. Member of the Oklahoma Bar seventy-five years. He was in the oil business, and he worked out of Tulsa. And that's where his career was, and his life. And his—while—he had moved us over there to Fayetteville, and he would come over on Friday and go back on Monday. And that was the—pretty much the s—his schedule all of my life. He would . . .

SL: So just on weekends. You just saw him on the weekends, then.

KP: Worked every weekend. No matter. But I doubt I suffered very much. [SL laughs] It was good.

SL: Yeah.

KP: You know. And it was—we got a lot done, you know. It was—painting. He was very handy kind of—we painted that house, I think, at one point. And we're doing—always doing something.

Refinishing. He loved to refinish furniture . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . old stuff, and so it was, you know, something going on all the time.

[00:41:44] SL: You know, you mentioned Rex Perkins earlier. He's kind of a famous lawyer from Fayetteville, and it seems like there was one really big murder case. Would—were you aware of any of that or . . .

KP: I don't think I was. I don't know . . .

SL: It may have been earlier.

KP: . . . if he—if I was a kid, they would—probably wouldn't share information . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . like that with the children . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . so I don't remember. But I remember he was—always was a prominent attorney . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . back in my earliest memories. But . . .

[00:42:23] SL: So did you have a favorite subject in school or a favorite teacher that . . .

KP: Yeah. I loved my second-grade teacher. Mrs. Sanders I believe

was her name. But I learned to read early in my life. And it was a truly—a revelation to me. I'd go down and get books that would open up a—it was like going to a movie or something like that. And I read all my life. And I still do. I love it. It's, you know, it's great. [00:43:03] And my family on my dad's side were school teachers back in Virginia. Old time—they ran a—I think they had a girl's school that they owned and taught at. And so we were always very involved in the education, you know. And I was lucky enough to have that at home to where I could—you know, I was probably, maybe a little bit ahead of a lot of kids that didn't. My dad read to us, and I suppose my aunts, too, you know, and my grandmother. We were all—they loved books. We had a big library in our house. And they were—that was a big, big deal.

[00:43:59] SL: What about newspapers? Did you read the newspapers?

KP: We took the—I was a paperboy when I was a kid. Had 100 papers in that neighborhood over there on Washington, Willow, Walnut, that area.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And we took the *Tulsa World* every day, which they didn't—you didn't get the Little Rock papers . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . back then.

SL: Right.

KP: But the *Tulsa World* was readily here.

SL: Right.

KP: I mean, they delivered that every day. So . . .

SL: I remember us getting that.

KP: . . . those were—and then we read the *Northwest Arkansas Times* every day, too. I think it came in the afternoon, and the *Tulsa World* came in the morning.

[00:44:37] SL: So when—do you remember when you started reading? How young you were?

KP: I was early. I was probably in the second or third grade. But I think maybe when I started reading on my own—like those sports books, John R. Tunis, those and—you know, it's almost—it's not exactly a—I can't remember. But I would go down to the library all the time. It was down off the square, where the . . .

SL: Small. It was a small place.

KP: And then they moved it over on Dickson Street.

SL: Dickson, yeah.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Roberta Fulbright.

KP: But I was always, always going down there and getting books.

SL: Jim . . .

KP: I loved it. And that was something a kid could do without any—you didn't need any help.

SL: Right.

KP: You could just go in there and browse till you found something you wanted and check it out and bring it back.

[00:45:41] SL: I know Jim Blair spent a lot of time there.

KP: Oh, I'm—I wouldn't be a bit surprised. He's very, you know, well read and . . .

SL: Right.

KP: But that's the kind of atmosphere I came out of, though. We were all—my family was always big readers. I can't—I took Latin, for instance . . .

SL: Oh gosh.

KP: . . . for a couple of years. And all that. I took languages all in school, and we, you know, were just into vocabulary. My dad—I can't imagine anybody knowing more words than he did.

SL: [*Laughs*] Than your dad.

KP: And but his father and my—all of our family were—took French. And I didn't take French, but I took Latin and Spanish and whatnot like that. But they were highly educated. Those girls

went to very good girl's schools. And back then—you know, the Classics. I think my dad even took Greek and, you know, Sanskrit, you know. [*Laughter*] I'm kidding, but that's . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . you know, it was pretty—a [*dog barking*] great basis for your—for education. I remember—because my vocabulary was a lot bigger than most of the kids I knew, I could understand, you know, I could—what I read, and that's what got me through—I was an English major up there at the university. But and later attended law school up there a couple years. But by then I was—I had kinda lost my drive to, you know, get to be an academic, for instance.

SL: Right.

KP: So I was up to other things when I got that age.

[00:47:45] SL: So you graduate from Fayetteville High School, and you enter the University of Arkansas?

KP: Correct.

SL: Is that where that went? But at one point, you went to the marines, right?

KP: I did. Uh-huh.

SL: Now what's the story on that? And why would you go to the marines?

KP: That's what my dad asked me. [*Laughter*] But my friend, one of my best friends all my life, was John Lewis, who lived right up the street from me. And he was kind of an older brother to me, although he was, I think, maybe a year or so older than me.

SL: Right.

KP: But he was also very active in the Episcopal church. He was the president of the state Young Churchmen as—which I was for—briefly for just following along in his, you know, his example. And Hayden was a member of the—Hayden McIlroy was a member of that church. The Trumbos—I mean, it was a—who lived in my neighborhood.

SL: Right.

[00:48:56] KP: And many, many of the kids that I grew up with and knew that were a little older than me, especially, that you would know through the church—and you'd been around them all those years, and so it wasn't—they weren't any strangers to you or anything like that. You knew them, and the town being so small, you interacted with them.

SL: So did you . . .

KP: So they decided to—Hayden and John decided they were gonna join the marines, and I said, "I think I'll"—that was after my first year at the university, and I said, "I'm going—I'll go with you.

Okay?" "Yep." And I was kind of a—even before that, they were good enough to, you know, include me in a lot of the stuff that we did.

SL: So and my brother Gary went with you . . .

KP: He did.

SL: . . . in the marines.

KP: He did.

SL: So that's quite a gathering of Fayetteville folk.

[00:50:00] KP: Well, and it sure was comforting because we went all the way out to San Diego, California. And that was, you know, great having a little few people there that—you weren't just lost by yourself.

SL: Right.

KP: I probably wouldn't've ever done that by myself. But and I doubt they would've. I think John and Hayden wouldn't have done it alone, but they—when they went and we all kind of—I can remember leaving down there at Drake Field . . .

SL: Frontier Airlines.

KP: . . . on a plane sitting on its tail like that.

SL: Really?

KP: Two little engines. I wouldn't—I don't know. I'd have to think that over before I'd say, "I'm gonna ride this plane all the way to

California." I don't know whether [*SL laughs*] it didn't—it sure doesn't look very big now when I see those pictures. I remember we were in the paper. I don't know if you remember that but . . .

SL: So this is 1960, [19]59, [19]60?

KP: Yeah.

[00:51:03] SL: So were we in the Vietnam War by then? Or just finished up the Korean War or . . .

KP: Well, we—the Korean War was over.

SL: Yeah.

KP: We did not have any active conflicts going in—on at that time when I was in. But I can remember, I think just about the time we were getting out of boot camp maybe, they had a—I considered it a very mean practical joke. We were in a big assembly, and they came in there and says, "Boys, the—we're going to war in Lebanon." Or something. I think maybe Beirut—they had had some big conflict going over there. Maybe they had taken some hostages or, you know . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . our—and of course, the marines had been active in that halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli . . .

SL: Right. Right.

KP: . . . shores of Tripoli. So they're, you know—so they scared—I can remember looking at Hayden, and [*laughs*] I thought he was—his eyes were about this big. And everybody was feeling, "Wow. Looks like we might" . . .

SL: Deploy.

KP: Yeah. "Have to go over there and do something."

SL: So . . .

KP: But it turned out to not to be true.

[00:52:33] SL: Was it about—let's see. What's the marine base out there?

KP: Well, Pen . . .

SL: Pendleton.

KP: . . . Pendleton is the big one.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And MCRD, the mar—recruit depot in San Diego. And then they have various other smaller. But Camp Pendleton is a huge marine base there.

SL: So . . .

KP: That's . . .

SL: Are you in basic for six months? Or how do the marines do that?

KP: Well, we made the mistake of joining at the first of the summer. And we got out there, and they were about a month behind

starting these new recruits through boot camp.

SL: Right.

KP: So we were living in, I mean, boot camp conditions and not getting any credit for it. And so we were there about twice as long in boot camp as you would normally be. It wasn't—it didn't take six months, but it took a—you know, probably a half of that or—and then we were assigned to—I was in—we were up there in—at Camp Pendleton we were all basic marines, riflemen, you know, not—we didn't have specialties because we were in the reserve program. And so we were essentially doing small arms training with other recruits. I mean, kinda bringing them along some. But we—a lot of people—when you get through with boot camp, they'd send you off to be a—you could be a clerk in an office or . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . supply or driving a truck or something like that. But we were pretty much involved in combat training the whole time I was out there.

SL: Let's take a break.

KP: Okay.

SL: But I want to come back to marines when we come back.

[Recording stopped]

[00:54:36] SL: We were in the marines. That's where we left off.

KP: Ah.

SL: I'm going to talk about the marines. Are we rolling?

Josh Colvert: We're rolling.

SL: Okay, so we've had our cup of coffee. *[Laughs]* And we left off you being in the marines, and you kind of got an extended residency in boot camp. Is that the way that . . .

KP: Yeah, that—because we arrived there at the first of the summer when they have everybody that graduates from high school, I guess or—you know, that's the biggest time for—put together these platoons to go through boot camp, so they're stacking them up. And there's not enough room or drill instructors or whatever to handle that much. So you just are there actually waiting for a cycle to come up. And so they are getting you up at the crack of dawn, screaming at you, kicking your butt, running you into the ground, and the whole thing. And you're not getting any credit for it. *[Laughter]* You're not—I mean, you're not—you're just there. But they are getting you into shape, I would say, and you're going—you know, doing some basic classes. But you're not in the system, so to speak.

SL: Is . . .

KP: So by the time we got around to it, we'd been there a good long

time, and that was unfortunate. But maybe it was fortunate. I don't know. It's . . .

[00:56:18] SL: So you went in with some other friends from Fayetteville, and you mentioned that you and John Lewis were very close friends.

KP: Yes.

SL: And it was maybe his—he kinda took the lead on going into the marines? Is that the way that worked?

KP: Well, my understanding as best I remember was that he and Hayden had decided—back in those days—excuse me. [*Clears throat*] Back in those days, everybody signed up for the draft when you were eighteen years old. And at tho—in those years you had what they called a military obligation to fulfill. You could either join active duty for two years, which is the minimum—I suppose you could've done more. Or if you joined one of these reserve programs, then you had, I think, six years of obligation, you know, you—of going to summer camps and going to meetings, you know, in the reserve program.

SL: Is that part of ROTC? Or . . .

KP: No. I was in the ROTC when I was at the university, but if—this was everybody, not university people or not school people so much as that every male of that age had this obligation to fulfill.

Now you could do it in several ways. You could join the Army National Guard. You could join, you know, various things. We—they chose—because we had the obligation. So it wasn't that we were dying to get into service, really, so much, but I always thought it—we were better off in the Marine Corps because all of the people that joined the Marine Corps volunteered. So you—at least you had people that wanted to be there, every one of them, or they wouldn't have joined the Marine Corps. Now granted it might be a little rougher and, you know—but at least if you ever did have to go away and fight somewhere or do anything, you could rely on the people you were with because they weren't any slackers or, you know, people that didn't want to be there. Those people were, you know, more than likely gonna be a more well-trained, cohesive outfit to be with. And so I always felt like, you know, I'd be better off. And they're well-trained. Everybo—every man in the marines was a rifleman first. And then whatever MOS they had later was just you know, additional to that. But . . .

[00:59:17] SL: So the idea was that you were more likely to survive combat . . .

KP: Indeed.

SL: . . . because of the better training that was offered in the Marine

Corps.

KP: That's what I thought.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And I think they believed it. And but John and Hayden, see, they were—they—John probably—they were on top of this stuff. They were thinking about it, and saying, "Hey, we gotta do something. Let's do this." And when they told me, I said, "Well, I'm in. I wanna do that too. Just because I've gotta do it too."

SL: Right.

KP: "And I'd rather do it with you guys than, you know, get sent off somewhere where I didn't know anybody." And you know, who knows?

[01:00:04] SL: Personal question from me. So how did my brother Gary get in—did he just . . .

KP: I think he heard later on that we were gonna do that, and he kinda piggybacked in. We were part of a reserve unit out of Fort Smith. And we used to have to go down there for meetings. And after we had gotten out, we were planning on, course, staying in the marine reserve, but they disbanded that unit down in Fort Smith, and so we were gonna have to go to Tulsa to meetings, and they would not require you to go over 100 miles or whatever it was . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . to meetings. And so they gave us the option to join the National Guard. In our case, we joined the 142nd Artillery outfit here in Fayetteville.

SL: Down at Drake Field.

KP: Uh-huh. And none of us were ever trained in artillery.
[*Laughter*] Don't—knew nothing about it. So consequently, were kind of like . . .

SL: Orphans.

KP: . . . chaplain's assistants, or you know, we had some kind of job description that didn't include shooting off a howitzer . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . or some—or knowing about all that.

SL: Right.

KP: So actually, it turned out pretty well for me. I was the—this is a headquarters battalion here in Fayetteville.

SL: Right.

[01:01:49] KP: And so we had a lot of officers here. And we had—like, for instance, the medical for the whole battalion was here. And I worked for a doctor. We'd go down to Fort Smith to—after we joined the National Guard, our summer camps were down there. And but it—that wasn't immediately after that because I

can remember going back out to California a couple of times, at least, to summer camps out there. But once they did disband that, I think most all of us joined the National Guard.

SL: So . . .

KP: And I was the—there was a doctor here in town who was the medical officer, and I became his assistant. And man, that was the best decision I ever got, because I would go down there to Fort Chaffee in the blazing hot summer, and those guys would be out there sleeping on the ground and, you know, hot, can't—we knew from hot because of being out there in boot camp in California. It was—in those Quonset huts, it was just like a . . .

SL: Oven.

KP: . . . like an oven. But we—I worked in the dispensary, which was air conditioned because it's—people injured or sick, you know, they don't put them—and they also had a refrigerator for medications and drugs that had to be refrigerated. So the bottom of that was a flat area. You know, like a—the—and we put a towel over the beer [*SL laughs*] and slipped it in there, so. And we were air conditioned. It was—you know, that was pretty nice.

[01:03:48] SL: So were you in the marines for two years? Is that how that works? Or . . .

KP: Well, actually . . .

SL: . . . you were in boot camp, and then you go to the local units?

KP: Well, after you get outta boot camp, you come back home, and you're assigned to—this would be this . . .

SL: Right. Okay.

KP: . . . bunch down in Fort Smith. But we were—and we did that for a couple of summers. After that I can remember going out to San Diego. And I'm thinking it was 1976. Could that be?

SL: Wow. That's a long—that's sixteen years later.

KP: Yeah. That must have been too long. But there was so—no, it couldn't have been that, then. There was a huge holiday back then, and they were—Fourth of July, they were firing, instead of these—you've seen big fireworks displays?

SL: Yeah.

[01:04:53] KP: They were firing these—ship out in the Mission Bay there in San Diego. They were firing those fireworks out of a howitzer. I mean, a big gun, whoosh, go up there, and boom! It was—I mean, forever.

SL: Fantastic.

KP: It was the most fabulous thing I ever saw [*SL laughs*] as far as pyrotechnics. It was just amazing.

SL: Wow.

KP: Anyway, when—we got back, and we finished our duties with the National Guard out of here, but . . .

[01:05:33] SL: What kinda stuff did you guys do, the neighborhood kids growing up on Washington Avenue and—any shenanigans [KP *laughs*] that—and you know, back when I was in grade school, if there was something that happened between the time that I left the grade school and walked back home up to Mount Sequoyah, by the time I got home, my mom knew all about it.

KP: [*Laughter*] Yeah, yeah.

SL: So . . .

KP: Yeah, there was very little—small towns, you know, it just like—it's like osmosis almost. I mean, they know somehow, some way. Somebody has seen you, they know who you are, they'll call, "That Scott Lunsford. He was over here doing something," and you know, call up your mom or something like that.

[01:06:25] We had—that neighborhood over there was full of kids back in those days. And we had two doors down from me a guy named Frank McConnell and his wife. I don't know if you remember J. D. and George McConnell?

SL: I do remember those names.

KP: That was their grandfather. And he was the sweetest guy. He had a big backyard like—that we had used for a softball. We

could go up to St. Joseph's and play up there, and we could go to Washington School and play over there. But he had—his backyard, all the neighborhood kids would go over there, and we would play work up softball. You didn't need, you know, two teams. You just start behind the catcher and after an out or so you moved to first base and moved all around.

SL: Right.

KP: And however many people were there, it was the way it worked. And they—we had so many—and this was young and old, kind of. And he was—he would always be out there kind of playing around. Not playing, because he was old, kind of a stove-up . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . granddaddy, kind of. But he loved all those kids. And that's—we played, you know, kick the can and softball and chase and all of those games that kids play. And you know, hide and seek, whatever. All of those things. And it was great because you're all—there was always something going on. And right there, I could hear somebody, my dad, go out there—he could whistle through his teeth, and you could hear it . . .

SL: You knew.

KP: . . . a mile away and you . . .

SL: You knew it was your dad.

KP: . . . ptchoo! You hit it. And but after you finished you could come back over, and always something going on. We had—all the way up Washington as far as Dickson—we had those kids—Mickey Cain, did you ever know hi—any of his . . .

SL: No, I didn't.

[01:08:38] KP: He had a little brother, too, maybe. Anyway, there was, you know, a bunch—bunches of people. And then up Lafayette there was Jody Crumpler and Donnie . . .

SL: Stone?

KP: No. He lived on down Lafayette towards the university. But he wasn't there, he wasn't in our crowd. Anyway, there was just people everywhere. The—oh, and the—for instance, the Ferrells. I don't know if you remember Coach Ferrell?

SL: Sure. Ton of Ferrells. There's a bunch of 'em.

KP: He—I mean a ton of 'em, and all—most of 'em boys. And they were always—we played with them, and you know, we could go over to St. Joseph's and play basketball, and you know, it was just something all the time.

SL: It was ideal.

KP: Yeah, yeah it was.

SL: The k—ideal place to grow up.

KP: Yeah.

SL: I remember as a child watching them stage the homecoming parade on Washington Avenue. They'd line up all the floats.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And I think they would hang a right and go down Dickson and then . . .

KP: Yeah, go down to Dickson . . .

SL: . . . go right on West and then on to Maple.

KP: . . . and then go down and then up to the university. And it was not only—it was about every parade that the city was involved in as well as the university. And yeah, that was very exciting for us little, younger kids because they had floats, and they were decorated like you would see on TV in the Rose Parade or something.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Not that elaborate, but . . .

SL: Right.

[01:10:14] KP: You know, all the . . .

SL: It's crepe paper instead of roses [*laughs*], but . . .

KP: . . . sororities—yeah. All those sororities and fraternities would put together this stuff, and they would line them up all up and down Washington, and you know, you could get out and—there was a lot of things connected with the university that, really, the

kids loved. We played over there all the time. We—when, like, school would start—I remember that was one of my first jobs, and I had made a lot of money over there when they—you go over to the girls' dormitories, and their parents are bringing them up, and there weren't any elevators back then. And so they ha—and most of the girls would have a lot of suitcases and boxes and stuff like that. And you could hump those boxes and suitcases up the stairs and—you know, for days, you know . . .

SL: That whole week.

KP: . . . not always consecutively, but . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . you know. And they would tip you for 'em. And it was a place where I got—I knew some of the people over there at the university in the concession. Did you ever know Goldie Jones or . . .

[01:11:36] SL: No, but I sold Cokes and . . .

KP: Yeah, well, w—I did some of that, but the prime job was selling programs.

SL: Right.

KP: Because you got done before the . . .

SL: The game.

KP: . . . game started.

SL: Yeah. Right.

KP: And if you knew s—and after a year or so, you kinda—there was a hierarchy, you managed to get 50 programs, and then maybe you got 100, then maybe you got 150. And that was always a way to make some extra money, too. You know, we didn't have much spare money back—didn't need it really.

[01:12:13] SL: That north end zone was just grass. Grass hill. So I know . . .

KP: And the south end zone, behind there—you member that scoreboard—they—back in there was quite a bit of open ground. We used to go down there. And when school was out, kids would go over there and play, you know.

SL: On the field.

KP: Yeah. Play all over. And spa—and in the Barnhill Fieldhouse there. And the—you remember the creamery?

SL: Yes.

KP: It was right there on the corner?

SL: Yeah.

KP: That was a big part of it, man. We'd go over there and get all hot and walk into that creamery, and I think maybe a dime or twenty-five cents or something you could buy a big old bottle of chocolate milk or orange—I don't know whether it was orange

juice or orangeade or something. I can remember those. That was another real treat.

SL: Yeah. Claudette and I used to buy cheese and milk on the loading dock.

KP: Uh-huh. Yeah, that's where . . .

SL: And that was really cheap and . . .

KP: Really good. And plus, you could go into there, especially in the summer and do—play on their gymnastic equipment and stuff like that that you would never see ordinarily anywhere outside of a, you know, big gym like that. And you could go in—I remember I learned to shoot snooker, which was a valuable—one of my [*SL laughs*] wonderful . . .

SL: Occupations?

[01:13:49] KP: Yeah. Well, it wasn't a—yeah. Yeah, in a sense occupation. But I can remember being a early teenager, twelve, thirteen years old. And in the summertime nobody's over there at the student union. And they had a billiard room, two or three snooker tables. And we used to go in there, and I started shooting snooker when I was that age. And then by the time I got up to be seventeen years old or so and could go in Roger's Recreation, I could do some good in there. You know what I'm saying?

SL: Yeah. I do know what you're saying.

KP: And I—that was always a big—I enjoyed that, and it's—that's a great game anyway, but . . .

[01:14:36] SL: 'Kay, I, wanna get back to Dickson Street in a moment. But this makes me think—what about the African American community in Fayetteville when you were growing up? I know it was small. But there was some influence coming out of that community, right? I mean, you had Buddy Hayes.

KP: Oh yeah.

SL: And who—Bull Hayes?

KP: Yeah.

SL: So . . .

KP: Well, you . . .

SL: . . . you wanna talk about . . .

KP: Well, that before—I think it was maybe high school, before they had the k—the Black kids used to go down to Fort Smith.

SL: Right.

KP: And then when they integrated these schools up here, ours was one of the first—I think in junior high maybe, we had one of the first integrated classes. And then as we moved over to the high school that—it was all integrated. And it was—we never—I knew every Black family in some way that lived here. I mean, they're

just—and Buddy Hayes, everybody knew him from the barbershop and playin'—he had a little band and, you know, s—and we had people that worked with our family as well as many others. And you know, wh—I can al—I can remember now thinking, "Well this integration deal isn't a big deal. We all—I know all these people, we get along fine, there's no animosity, there's no trouble." And then I found out later that it was probably because there were so few Black people that they didn't have a chance—or—and I'm—I don't know whether they would have or not, but there wasn't any trouble because there were so few of 'em. And Fayetteville being a pretty progressive town i—always, you know, with people who were—we didn't have segregation strictly like they would in a agricultural s . . .

SL: Rural setting.

[01:16:56] KP: Yeah. Some of there, where—so I found out later after, especially maybe in the Marine Corps, you get in there, and there's a few Blacks, and there's a few Cajuns, and there's a few of everything. And they all get along. And then if it gets a bigger percentage, the Black people tend to hang together like—I guess that's—I'm sure it's normal, has to be the way it is. And then you start getting separate . . .

SL: Factions.

KP: Yeah, factions and grievances or whatever. And it becomes—I can—I learned later, of course, in the wide world that—'cause you'd go up there to the university, even before I was in the university, to some of those—like at the student union, they'd have these big, beautiful dances with the girls in evening gowns and the guys in tuxedos . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . and all that. And that's where I first started hearing Black music. Some were brought up to play for sorority or fraternity parties, some were brought in by the university. And it was—that was—I was just carried away by it all. And it was all so—the people, the musicians and everybody, were so accommodating and friendly and all. Only later on when you get down into the heart of either Tulsa or Memphis or some of these where there's Black—only Black people, or by far the majority are Black people, that you run into people who resent you being there. And that's—I learned—that all came later. But I thought, man, it was all—you know, there was—we were all God's children.

[01:19:13] SL: Yeah, by the time I came along I—it just wasn't an issue really at all. Yeah . . .

KP: Yeah, well, it wasn't really for us, either.

SL: Some of the folks I've interviewed talk about how the balconies
in the theaters . . .

KP: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . that was where the African Americans would sit.

KP: Yeah, yeah.

SL: They wouldn't sit down with the white folks . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . down below.

KP: That's true. I remember it, but I was very young . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . back in those days, and like some place like the UARK
Theater, which didn't have balconies, I think . . .

SL: Right. They still . . .

KP: . . . they might sit in the back or something . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . but you know, I think most of that was voluntary.

SL: Yeah.

KP: You know. But . . .

[01:19:55] SL: Also I remember smoking in the theaters.

KP: I think I do too.

SL: It was so weird.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Y—people could just . . .

KP: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . everybody could smoke if they wanted to.

KP: Yeah. That was ama [*laughter*—and you could see from the film, you know, in the back . . .

SL: You could see the smoke. Yeah, yeah.

KP: . . . and the smoke kind of wisping through there. Very noir. Or, yeah.

[01:20:17] SL: So did you ever get to hear Buddy Hayes at George's?

KP: Oh, yeah. He played all the . . .

SL: Half Pint and . . .

KP: . . . not at George's. Yeah, all those guys, but they played high school dances. They played all the time for school, more high school and stuff like that. They weren't tremendously polished, but . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . they, you know. It was—yeah, I can remember 'em . . .

SL: Piano, drums.

KP: . . . always. Uh-huh. Bass.

SL: S—a sax or some—a horn, maybe be a horn . . .

KP: It'd be a horn more than . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . guitars back . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . that was before the guitars took over music.

[01:20:53] SL: So let's talk about Roger's Rec.

KP: All right.

SL: So that Roger, Roger Kidder . . .

KP: Kidder, mm-hmm.

SL: . . . was the guy. And it was just a concrete floor, and there were domino tables . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . toward the front door.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And the pool tables on the back half of it, and a bar. And beer. I don't remember hard liquor being there. It was just beer.

KP: No, they didn't serve hard liquor back then.

SL: And I remember Roger would have a money roll about that big around with a rubber band that he'd pull off the dollar bills for change. I mean, he was like . . .

KP: Change.

SL: . . . the cash register. You know.

KP: He was bookin'.

SL: [*Laughs*] He was bookin'.

KP: And he had also—you've forgotten all those pinball machines.

SL: Oh. I have.

[01:21:46] KP: And back in those days, you could—these kids, especially from the university, would come in there and buy two or three rolls in nickels, I guess they were. And you'd just keep plugging them in there until the odds go way up, and then you play the game, and you could win hundreds of games. And then you could cash 'em in for cash. So and the better player . . .

SL: At a nickel a game or something or . . .

KP: Huh?

SL: A nickel a game?

KP: I expect, yeah.

SL: Yeah?

KP: They probably gave you your money back, but [*SL laughs*] if you'd run—if you only played a n—paid a nickel and won 100 games or 500 games or something like that, then you can see how that . . .

SL: Made money.

KP: . . . and the good guys lear—really learned how to game that system. There was all kinds of tricks to maybe slipping something under the front two legs to get it up to where the

balls didn't roll down so fast . . .

SL: Fast.

KP: . . . and then you could [*SL laughs*]*—*you know, and some of 'em you could bump. You know, you learned how to bump 'em without tilting 'em . . .

SL: Tilting 'em, yeah.

KP: . . . and yeah, that was*—*and of course, you could bet on*—*there were some*—*I wouldn't say it was a full-blown betting parlor, but you could bet on fights and games and stuff like that in there as well. [01:23:17] Like and there used to be a guy named Slim Henderson from Fort Smith and Moffett. You know about Moffett?

SL: Mm-hm.

KP: He was a gambler down there, and they used to put out what they call parlay cards every week, had all the games. You'd put in a dollar and pick your ones, and then if you win, they pay you off. And I worked for him f*—*when I was in school up there taking those cards around to the*—*mostly fraternity houses. I did. I guess there was a lot of other outlets or so but*—*and then you go by and pick 'em up and the money, and I would put 'em in a shoebox and tape it up and put it on a Greyhound bus going down to Fort Smith. And then on Monday or Tuesday he would

either come up or send it up—the payoffs. It was—yeah.

SL: And you'd have to make the payoffs? Or . . .

KP: Well, he would usually come up and pay the . . .

SL: Oh.

KP: . . . money.

SL: Okay.

KP: But after I'd been with him for several years, while I was in school, he would send it up here, and I would take care of that part of it, too. But that was—I always remember that. That was . . .

SL: Wow.

KP: Yeah. Big time gambling.

SL: Big time stuff.

KP: Gambling.

[01:24:47] SL: So around—you'd go down Dickson Street to West Street, hang a right, and you'd go up the street a block or so, and there on the corner of Lafayette was the Red Lion Club. Do y . . .

KP: That was a . . .

SL: Do you remember that at all?

KP: Of course. That was a—that came, actually—that wasn't always there. But it was one of the best rock-and-roll clubs that we had

down in that area. Besides . . .

SL: So . . .

KP: . . . George's. And George's was not a—it was a college hangout for professors as well as students, and it was not—didn't have a dance portion of it until later. But it was just a bar. And then they had that garden out in back and . . .

SL: Wisteria garden.

KP: Right, vines . . .

SL: Where the plants would grow, the grape vines . . .

KP: . . . or whatever it was.

SL: Yeah.

KP: All that back there, but there wasn't any—and only later did it get a musical . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . component.

[01:25:51] SL: What about, do you remember—back at the Red Lion Club did you ever meet Charlie Smoot?

KP: I remember that name.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Did he own the place? Or . . .

SL: Well, he managed it.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And apparent—the story I always heard was that he kinda got in trouble in Chicago, and whoever owned the place . . .

KP: Huh.

SL: . . . sent him down from Chicago to kinda run that bar.

KP: Huh. Well, I . . .

SL: At the time. And I'm not sure it was all that—I don't know.

KP: I don't know, I'm not . . .

SL: You don't know?

KP: . . . I don't—didn't really—I was in there all the time, but especially on the weekends, and he had a—that's where, you know, they—that was the . . .

SL: It eventually became West Street, what they called West Street, and that was a big time—I mean, that was . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . the rock-and-roll venue at the time. [01:26:43] All right. So now what about the Library Club?

KP: Yeah.

SL: On Dickson Street.

KP: That was a big, big place for us.

SL: You know, Dickie Pool.

KP: Yeah. Swinging Door.

SL: Well, now, the Swinging Door . . .

KP: Which was the Library, wasn't it? Or . . .

SL: No, it was next door to it.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. That was a little later, but the Library . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . predates the Swinging Door by . . .

KP: Oh, yeah.

SL: . . . quite a bit, doesn't it?

KP: Yeah.

SL: I mean, talking with Dick Pool, he really had it envisioned as a jazz club, you know?

[01:27:13] KP: And they did have jazz in there, but there wasn't enough jazz musicians around to fill it up all the time.

SL: Right.

KP: So, but . . .

SL: It eventually moved to rock and roll as well. So across the street there was a hotel. The Scott Hotel. Do you ever remember seeing that?

KP: Yeah.

SL: I don't know much about it, or I guess it would be filled up for the football games, I guess? I . . .

KP: I don't have a lot of clear memories of it either. I mean, I don't

think I was in there—they didn't have any bars or, you know, I don't know . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . a restaurant, or I don't think. I think that was just a place where you could stay, I guess, but what was the one up on the corner of the square? That hotel? Remember that?

[01:28:10] SL: I don't know why I wanna call it the Washington, but that doesn't sound . . .

KP: Yeah, maybe.

SL: It may be right.

KP: Maybe. Yeah.

SL: What about . . .

KP: That was a more of a . . .

SL: Uptown . . .

KP: Yeah . . .

SL: . . . place?

KP: . . . hotel. And then they had a pool hall right a—on the other side of the square going down to—on what's that, Block Street, I guess? Or . . .

SL: Yeah, I don't know that I remember that.

KP: Well, you know where those underground—kind of like Hugo's is now?

SL: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KP: Well, up there on the corner, there was an underground big room there that was a pool hall . . .

SL: Huh.

KP: . . . called Batson's Rat Hole. Or [*SL laughs*] it wa—I don't know if that was the official name, but that's what everybody called it.

SL: But that's what everybody called it.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And it was full of old, you know, spitters and shooters and what not. But Ra—Roger's was by far the biggest emporium like that. They were full—Roger's, you say pool tables in there. There were maybe two or three pool tables, and the rest of 'em were snooker tables.

SL: Snooker.

[01:29:23] KP: And those guys, all those good shooters from—not only from around here but students that would come up to the university—there was always some really good shooters. And there was a lively gambling—you know, sometimes people would put together money and back some good shooter . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . that they'd have. And then there was always somebody,

ringers coming in that . . .

SL: *Cool Hand Luke*.

KP: Yeah. Running the table on you . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . and say, hey, what was that? [*Laughter*] But that's . . .

SL: Not *Cool Hand Luke*, but . . .

KP: That was a center for especially us kids at in high s—later high school and college. That was probably as—and the townspeople, of course, went down there every Saturday. Old and young. Especially before ball games and after, you could—that was kind of a real . . .

SL: The spot.

KP: . . . spot. Social . . .

[01:30:25] SL: What about Jug Wheeler's?

KP: Jug's was a famous—for kids. It was more teenage like more the . . .

SL: Where you take your date.

KP: . . . *American Graffiti* or whatever . . .

SL: Oh. Yeah.

KP: . . . you know, that cr—and people that are just gotten cars, they would drive up and down and go through there and just keep, you know, like—I guess it's a story that's told all across

the country, maybe the world. There are places like that where you just cruisin'.

SL: Cruise.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And that was—take your date in there, or if you, you know, you just—I remember I had a good friend Brian Walker who I—one of the first guys I met, he went to Washington School when I first moved here. And he—his father, Brian Sr., was the one that gave 'em Walker Park and stuff. They were a very old family down there in the south part of town.

SL: Mm-hmm.

[01:31:31] KP: And they had—they were right there past what is now 15th Street, maybe. Down there, just a little farther south to the east they had a farm. Kind of a small—I mean, it wasn't a big farm. But they had a farm down there. And Brian would drive his tractor [*laughter*] up to the square and all around and drag Jug Wheeler's in that tractor. He had a little platform on the back, you know, for—I guess they put hay bales . . .

SL: Hay, yeah, sure.

KP: . . . on it and stuff. Yeah. And he was always—you know, he was a great character, and he would drive that tractor through

Jug's all the time and . . .

[01:32:15] SL: What's the other one? The bar across from the cleaners that's still there?

KP: Maxine's Tap Room?

SL: Maxine's.

KP: Oh, yeah. She was a good friend of mine. She and her sister. They were kind of a—really a famous bar for years and years. Maxine was married to a guy named Fats York. And he was a big, burly kind of a bar guy. And I think he was a k—did some gambling and some maybe bootleggin'. I don't know about all that. He got killed in a car wreck, I think, somewhere out around Prairie Grove or Lincoln. And Maxine and her sister, big ol' gal, they ran that bar, and I mean they ran it, too. They were tough, both those women were tough [*SL laughs*] and could—and of course there's a lot of people hanging around the square, old guys that would start early and get in their cups before dark, maybe, even. And then they'd get rowdy. And I can remember Maxine, you know, throwing 'em out of there, or her sister. I forget her name. She was a great lady, too.

[01:33:51] But they had—Maxine had a nephew named—he's Latrell, Lutrell, I forget his first name right now. But he—I think he was from Oregon, maybe, or up there somewhere. And he

got in trouble, and they sent him down here. And he and I became good friends. It w—it s—high school age, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . and he was down here. And we ran around together. And Maxine lived down here on Mission Street, oh, about Prospect Street, you know, along in there?

SL: Right.

KP: So—or—do you know where Rush Drive is?

SL: Absolutely.

[01:34:39] KP: Yeah. Well it's—come on south a block or so, and she just lived—had a house, a stone house, right there on Mission Street. And that's where he lived, and I spent all kinds of time over there with them. And then I—'cause she and I b—were friends, you know, and she's quite a character. And later as I got into college, I used to go down there. In fact that was one of—I remember the fun of taking one of these Chi Omegas—back then they—those were pretty rough places like Armstrong's Tavern down the hill and those places. And what's that café right there on Dickson Street where Helen and—I'll think of it in a minute. Anyway, not many people from the university ever went in there, but we kind of—I started taking dates over there, sit around and drink beer and now—and then they later became

just college hangout. I mean . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . a lot. But they used to be full of old guys, mostly, and girl—
women from that were . . .

SL: Residents of fay . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . old time residents of Fayetteville.

[01:36:01]] KP: Yeah. It wasn't high tone by any means.

SL: Right.

KP: But . . .

SL: Yeah, what is the—what was the name of that restaurant
originally? I know it's the . . .

KP: One . . .

SL: . . . it had two levels, one—there was one—a basement
underneath it. One . . .

KP: Well, you remember where that laundromat used to be right
there? You don't remember the Restaurant on the Corner?

SL: Restaurant on the Corner.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

KP: That, and then right across from that was this—the D-Lux.

SL: The D-Lux. That's it.

KP: It wasn't Deluxe, it was the D-Lux.

SL: D-Lux. That's right. Next door to . . .

KP: And that was, and that was Helen and her husband . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . who are great friends of mine. That's where—we'd take girls in there, too, and that was kind of bef—breaking the city and college crowd.

[01:36:51] SL: Well two things. Now I've been told that Jug's used to deliver beer to the campus.

KP: I think he did, yeah.

SL: Unheard of.

KP: Oh yeah.

SL: C—you couldn't do that now.

KP: Oh, of course not. And you know, I don't know how many IDs were involved [*SL laughs*], but you might have one guy that had an ID, and it might be a fake ID. And they're ordering cases of beer, and they're signing up, you know. He's covered. He would deliver that. That was . . .

SL: That was wild.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And then the post office was in the center of the Square. I can remember when it was a post office.

KP: Yeah, me, too.

SL: It was great.

KP: Long—yeah. They're . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . I'm . . .

SL: All that nice wood counters and . . .

KP: . . . sure happy they saved all that.

SL: . . . cages and stuff.

[01:37:42] KP: I think there was always something about people
wanting to tear that down or something . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . and do something with it. But I'm sure happy they've saved
it.

SL: Saved it.

KP: It's so charming and . . .

SL: Yeah. It's good.

KP: . . . at the Square and all. A lot of places lost all their downtown
squares 'cause all the business moves out . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . but they found a way to keep it all together.

[01:38:04] SL: Seems like there was one other place that I was
gonna ask you about. Course, the train was an actual train

depot. I mean, it was a passenger train as well.

KP: Oh, yeah.

SL: And it was kind of a big deal. I remember my parents would take the train to get to football games. Like, they'd take the train to Little Rock and then over to Mississippi to Ole Miss games somehow or another.

KP: Could have been.

SL: Yeah.

KP: I'm sure there were connections to be made. I think that train ran—I don't know what the name of it was—of those . . .

SL: I don't either, but there's pictures of . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . massive crowds around the depot.

[01:38:57] KP: Yeah. Well, that was also kids. We used to jump on those trains moving real slow through Fayetteville. And those tracks were not, you know, the most even, so they didn't roar up and down through there.

SL: Right.

KP: We could jump on one and jump off maybe when it got to Johnson or something.

SL: Wow.

KP: And then walk back, but [*SL laughs*] that was exciting . . .

SL: That's a pretty good walk for kids.

KP: . . . for kids, yeah. Back—well, what did we care? We were, you know, kids.

[01:39:25] SL: Right. So when did you start seeing bands? And becoming more familiar with the music scene in Fayetteville? And there are—there were a number of bars along College Avenue as well. I forget what—the Huddle Club.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And there was another one out there by the Huddle Club.

KP: 71 Club. And the . . .

SL: The 71 Club. Of course, there was the 71 Drive-In Theatre below Herman's that was making its . . .

KP: Yeah, and then right across from that was the 71 Club. And that was—I started playing music in high school kinda just as a—like kids.

SL: Yeah.

KP: We had a little group, like you probably did, too. And so I was interested from that time. And I was always—like I say, came from a musical family. I was singing all my life. I was in the church choir, and the school choirs, the university singers. The Scoville . . .

SL: Oh, wow, Scoville.

KP: . . . sco—up there—yeah.

SL: Who was the director for you, then? Wasn't Brothers, was it?

KP: It might've been. That name sounds real . . .

SL: Is that right?

[01:40:49] KP: . . . familiar, but so I was always into that. And as I was telling you, I would go up there to the university when those sororities and fraternities were having big ban—dances. Their—you remember they had . . .

SL: Sure.

KP: . . . that balcony up there?

SL: Yep.

KP: Stand up there and—or sit up there in that little balcony and watch those—I mean, big bands come in. Some—Phineas Newborn. And he would have a Black band that came over from Memphis. Big orchestra.

SL: Right.

KP: And then Stan Kenton . . .

SL: Wow.

KP: . . . and, you know, those. I mean, they had some big ones. And then they started bringing in some of the mostly Black bands that would play for s—dances at the student union. Or down there at the UARK Bowl . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . or at fraternity and sororities. And so I would—got to where I knew my way around to kinda surreptitiously get in the back and listen. And I was just thrilled by it all. Especially when rock and roll started. Or even before that. They played rhythm and blues before—I mean, there wasn't—that was before electric guitars took over and th—mostly piano driven or horn driven. And but that—they got into more rhythm, and that was . . .

[01:42:27] SL: So did you miss—did you not do anything as far as the folk music goes? Or . . .

KP: Oh, yeah.

SL: Yeah?

KP: We were in the first, I think the first, Ozark Folk Center. I mean Ozark—the Folk Festival. Used to have it over in Eureka Springs, I think, when they first started. And we were—I think we were—a friend of mine—you know Paul Berry?

SL: [*Laughs*] Absolutely.

KP: He thought he was [*laughs*] gonna be a—he wanted to be a—he could sing. And he had a nice voice, but he wanted to be a performer. And we used to play in high school. I ha—I played with some guys that—we used to sing, kind of folk music and the last of the three and four-part harmony . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . and like that stuff. But Paul—when we went up to the university—I think we were freshmen, and he was always promoting this stuff. I wasn't, you know—he'd say—and I could play the guitar, and he couldn't. He didn't have an instrument. So I would play, and we both would sing. For—and that was back when folk music was very popular.

SL: So you were a duo.

KP: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] And here's the beautiful, the funniest part about it all. You know, the Ozarks and Fayetteville and this part of the country is kind of a wonderful repository and resource of Ameri—what they call Americana.

SL: Right.

KP: Which—or it was folk . . .

SL: Hill music.

[01:44:11] KP: It was folk music, but it wasn't the three—you know, it wasn't . . .

SL: It wasn't Peter, Paul and Mary.

KP: Right. It wasn't that. [*SL laughs*] But it was—you know, this part of the country—all the old folk music that originated here—or not originated, but maybe in—originated in Scotland, you know . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . you know, whatever. And instead of us playing that, Paul thought it was—our future lay in calypso music. Can you imagine? [*Laughter*]

SL: Yeah. I can.

KP: And we went over there to Eureka Springs, and played—there was fiddle players and, I mean, all kinds of good players, and we were playing Harry Belafonte songs [*laughs*] in the folk—you know, in this folk festival. It was, I mean, a hoot! [*SL laughs*]
[01:45:05] And back then, in high school, he and I went down to Fort Smith. You know, they had one of the first TV st . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . stations in this area. Or you know, and there wasn't anything up here like that.

SL: Right.

KP: And the—some friends of ours—later, that's how I met 'em—teen—had teen shows down there on that—on this little Fort Smith's TV show. Paul and I started going down there. I'd been chasing Fort Smith girls ever since church camp all those years before. And I knew some of the really—had lovely girls, of course, everywhere. So we would go down there and play on TV.

SL: You'd be stars.

KP: We were. In our minds, I guess. [*SL laughs*] But it was so funny 'cause we were playing—instead of being aware of and learning and refining the music, the Americana, I call it . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . music, we were doing this stuff that, you know.

SL: No one else was doing.

KP: It's just—I mean, it was just—but we were—we could sing it in harmony, you know, and play.

SL: Well, it was kind of hot in its own way.

KP: It was. Actually they . . .

SL: Upbeat.

KP: Yeah, we had a good reception. But the idea—it was just such a weird [*SL laughs*] thing.

SL: So that . . .

KP: That's how we got st—I got started playing music in bands and whatnot. And then later we, you know, started learning more. And as I got deeper into—at first—it wasn't very long—I had friends that worked for—I know you remember Dayton Stratton.

SL: Oh yeah.

[01:47:05] KP: He—I had friends a little older than me, that star—were working for him. And I kinda got in on the con—they

would—I would be with them. And I would—like, I could work the door. I couldn't bartend, but a lot of those bars I worked back in those days just, like, taking money at the door . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . you know, like that . . .

SL: So . . .

KP: . . . to hear the music, and that was kinda where I really got exposed to some good—and met some wonderful, you know, friends, like Dayton and . . .

SL: So . . .

KP: . . . others.

SL: . . . did Dayton own or manage—were there, like, two or three clubs that he . . .

KP: Oh, yeah, he—both. He owned—he started out managing them, I think, mostly. I don't know if you remember a club called the Tee Table?

SL: Yeah.

KP: Out there by the airport.

SL: Right.

KP: And it used to be a driving range back behind there.

SL: Right.

[01:48:09] KP: And that's why they called it the Tee Table. And that

was—I can remember, there were some great acts come through there. Conway Twitty, and maybe—I don't know whether Johnny Cash ever played out there or—but Jerry Lee Lewis and some—I mean, that's where—that was one of the first places I remember, and Dayton ran that. I don't think he owned it. But then he was kind of the godfather of all that music that started here because he had the idea to—when these university guys, bands, would come up to play for a dance, he'd get them to come play in his club, either before or after. And they were here, and it was chance to make a play—payday. You know, and so . . .

SL: Sure.

KP: . . . that's how he really got . . .

SL: Tapped into it.

[01:49:12] KP: Well, yeah. And he was so good at it. And so he—and he owned—or he didn't own a lot of those clubs, but he finally—later on, he and—maybe Ronnie Hawkins and Donny Stone, I think. And he got together and financed—Donny was playing pro football, and Ronnie was making money in the music business. They bought the Rockwood Club. And that was kind of the big one.

SL: Big club.

KP: Big club. And he got all kinds of great music in.

[01:49:46] SL: So Dayton was a little guy.

KP: Wasn't that little.

SL: He wasn't?

KP: He wasn't very tall, but he was . . .

SL: Stout.

KP: I mean, stout.

SL: I've always heard that he could take down a football player without a problem.

KP: I never saw him have any—he was so easygoing, but when he—you know, if you . . .

SL: Someone was out of line.

KP: . . . pushed him too far.

SL: Yeah.

KP: He could take care of it. He could. He was a tough hombre.

SL: That's the kinda guy you want managing your club. [*Laughs*]

KP: Yeah. And he had such a sweet personality. He wasn't, you know, looking for . . .

SL: Right.

KP: He was all—he could settle most things down, and everybody would keep cool. And but he could handle the . . .

SL: Those that wouldn't listen.

KP: . . . trouble.

[01:50:35] SL: Yeah. Yeah, I've always been fascinated by that.

That he was not intimidated by . . .

KP: Oh, not at all.

SL: . . . size or . . .

KP: No. And he had some pretty good help, too. We—I worked for him for years both here and—they bought—he bought a club over in—he was going to expand to the University of Oklahoma. He bought a club out south of Norman. And I remember I was still in university. We went over there one summer and redid this—it was a country, rough country place. But it was big and nice, had a good band stand and all that. Put that all together and then—but it was too far from home, and you couldn't get those cowboys to settle down, you know. We had to fight our—you know, do our share of settling people down.

SL: Right.

KP: And I was, you know, young and strong, been through the marines and all that. Plus, I used to have a one of those little blackjacks wrapped in leather, you know.

SL: Right.

KP: About that long.

SL: Right, right. That's a persuader, right there.

KP: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] Keep the peace. And they wouldn't—they didn't want the—we were depending on the sorority and fraternity crowds out of the Oklahoma University. But they couldn't dislodge these cowboys so it—they never made a real good mixture. I mean, they just didn't go together that well, and we finally got out of there. But I—there was a guy, Kenneth Brooks . . .

SL: Kenny Brooks.

KP: . . . famous guys around here.

SL: Yeah.

[01:52:39] KP: He worked with Dayton for a long time, and he was a tough customer. And John Mayhan, one of my best friends growing up, he was kind of a protégé of theirs, and he was a tough guy himself. And so we worked for him. I was always in school, but on weekends and Wednesday night—not always Wednesday, it'd depend on what's going at school, but I worked for him most weekends while I was in school.

SL: So you started just being the doorman. Getting people—taking the money at the door.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And but then you kinda . . .

KP: And stocking . . .

SL: And stocking.

KP: After the place was—before and after.

SL: Right.

KP: You know, I didn't sell it, but I would, you know.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And you could—I—there was all kinds of little jobs that went with it.

SL: But eventually you moved to what I would call being a bouncer, if you had to be. I mean . . .

KP: Yeah. Well, that was part of it. But there wasn't a whole lot of—I mean, like, there was—I wasn't the principle peacekeeper in there. I was . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . a kid.

SL: You were backup.

KP: There were some. But we knew how to—you know, Dayton had a pretty good system of how to deal with it. And you know, you get used to it. And actually, it's—that was just part of it.

[01:54:09] SL: So did you kind of abandon your music stuff when . . .

KP: Well, I was always playing for myself. I wasn't in a organized band traveling around . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . at that time. But I had always been able to play and sing, and did almost all of my young adult life.

SL: I think the only time—I may be wrong with this, but I think the only time I ever heard you was at Gary and Marty's wedding in the yard.

KP: I did play . . .

SL: On the lawn.

KP: . . . for them. Yeah.

SL: And I was so enthralled with that. You were so—you were good.
[Laughs]

KP: Well, I enjoyed it, for sure.

SL: You know, and it was just that—out of the blue.

KP: Yeah.

[01:55:01] SL: So I'll get—I wanna—well, let's just go ahead and keep going with this club thing. I guess this kind of brings us into the Ronnie Hawkins stuff. Is that—I mean it . . .

KP: Well, he started—he got a late start in music. He . . .

SL: Right.

KP: He was not a, you know, a trained musician. But what a showman. He put—I can remember first, I think we were in high school, he played some of our bands. He had a band here,

Harold . . .

SL: Jenkins.

KP: . . . Pinkerton and . . .

SL: Oh, Harold Pinkerton, yeah.

KP: . . . what was that guy's name? Anyway, he had a—I'll think of somebody's . . .

SL: Pop—something?

KP: No, that was . . .

SL: That was later?

KP: Yeah, that was . . .

SL: Keyboard player?

KP: Yeah, that was with Ronnie and the Hawks. I mean, they . . .

SL: Right.

[01:55:53] KP: But the local guys were Harold, and I think maybe Herman Tuck was playing drums for them a little bit. And . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . then they had a—their good guitar player was—what is his name? Anyway, they had some—you know, they were not professional, but they were good. They could play. And Ronnie was so dynamic, you know, that he would—everybody—you know, make you laugh.

SL: He knew how to work the crowd.

KP: For—before anything, he would have you laughing and, you know, and fired, and he was so up tempo.

SL: Yeah.

KP: That that was—it started out in high school, but he—and I've known, you know, if—in this town, if you know—I knew those guys just from being around them all the time. And as he started developing bands and playing more—and I was working for Dayton back then . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . that I became friends with a lot of the people that were playing around here. And especially with—when Levon, he was young, like, my age. And he and I were just immediately very good friends 'cause we both are—loved to laugh, and saw the, you know . . .

SL: Saw the humor.

[01:57:20] KP: Yeah. In almost everything. So [*SL laughs*] that's how—and I got to meet a lot of different bands like that. People coming in that would play for Dayton. And I would, you know, hum—help with the equipment and setting up, and all that stuff. But until I really started traveling around with Ronnie and—because of Levon and Robbie, the two younger guys. And back then, the other guys were older. But those two young guys, we

all became real good friends and, you know.

[01:58:04] SL: So you actually traveled with Ronnie and the Hawks?

Is that . . .

KP: Oh yeah. Well, I didn't go to Canada with them till later. And I never went with Ronnie.

SL: Right.

KP: But we'd go to Tulsa all the time or down to Little Rock and—or you know, that far. I'd travel with them to go down for the weekend and then come back. But I was always pretty much ostensibly in school. [*SL laughs*] But you know, I was enrolled at the university, and I was, you know, doing that. But I gradually got more and more engrossed and in love with . . .

SL: Rock and roll?

KP: . . . this rock and roll music. It was . . .

[01:58:53] SL: So I've got a recording that Randy Stratton gave me of Ronnie at the Fondalite Club . . .

KP: Yeah, in Tulsa.

SL: . . . outside of Tulsa.

KP: Yeah. Been there many, many times.

SL: I love that name, Fondalite.

KP: Yeah, me too. [*SL laughs*] Well, some of those were pretty exciting. There was a time or two when, you know, the time—

came time to pay off, and some of those guys weren't—that were supposed to be there to pay us weren't around when the show was over. And then they—we had some exciting times like that. But most of the time, we played in the Fondalite—there were some other clubs in Tulsa that we played.

[01:59:37] SL: Was—did—was Jerry Yount ever a part of it?

KP: Oh, yeah.

SL: Was . . .

KP: Well, he played with—who did he play with?

SL: I remember meeting him.

KP: Yeah, me too. Did he play with Ronnie? I don't know.

SL: I'm not sure, but he . . .

KP: Yeah, I don't think . . .

SL: . . . he came up to our house. He had a little—he had a Corvette, a old, real sporty-looking, rounded Corvette, the old ones. And I remember being fascinated [*laughs*] by his car. And also the way he looked. I mean . . .

KP: Yeah, he was a—kinda looking to be a . . .

SL: Yeah, yeah. So I—yeah, I don't know who he played with. I—and I'm just now thinking . . .

KP: I'm trying to think . . .

SL: . . . well, maybe he did play with Ronnie, some.

KP: He might have. But I . . .

SL: I wish I could remember the guitar player early on with Ronnie.

I know I've . . .

KP: Well, I know . . .

SL: . . . got it. It's in his book.

KP: Yeah.

SL: You know. So . . .

[02:00:34] KP: Well, I knew those guys that—like Fred Carter
and . . .

SL: Freddie Carter.

KP: . . . Jimmy Luke Paulman and those. And he had—of course,
that piano player just could destroy a piano . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . almost with his hands. But like I say, I did not run around
with those guys. They were older than me.

SL: Older.

KP: And they were doing, you know, who knows what. But I started
hanging with Levon, especially. And then when Robbie came in,
he and I—and then he was bringing others down from Toronto,
kids. Canada. Not all of them in Toronto, but—and I became
good friends with all the younger . . .

SL: So . . .

KP: . . . younger guys.

[02:01:25] SL: So do you remember the first time you met Lee?

KP: Well, I don't know. Probably I was—you know, I just started—you know, we were out there at the Rockwood, probably. And then later, we started—you know, we'd get together at the motel out there. The Iris, I believe it was.

SL: Iris motel.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Yeah, sure.

KP: And but it was over time when Levon and I just, you know, clicked together. And we enjoyed each other and made each other laugh. And that was kind of how I got tight with him.

[02:02:07] SL: Do you remember when Robbie came in?

KP: Yeah, I do. He was younger. And he kind of depended on Levon to—you know, he was with Levon. They were—but Levon was the—kind of the driving wheel, and Robbie was a young kid that was hanging with him. You know, looking to him to learn . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . how the wheels go around and all.

SL: Yeah, didn't—well, seems like maybe it was in Ronnie's book that—or something I read or saw somewhere, where Robbie showed up in black leather in the middle of the summer down in

Arkansas?

KP: I don't know if it was leather . . .

SL: Came in on a bus.

KP: . . . but he might've had a big long overcoat on.

SL: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

KP: Black overcoat.

SL: Right.

KP: But I don't know if he had enough—I doubt he had enough money to buy a leather coat. But yeah. He was—he rode down here on a bus from Toronto, I think.

SL: Yeah.

[02:03:11] KP: And he had a lot of guts to—you know, it's like, going—being a immigrant.

SL: Well, he had seen the group in Canada, right?

KP: Yeah.

SL: And was just really young.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And he . . .

KP: Age sixteen, I think.

SL: Yeah, came to every show or something.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Really just hungry to play.

KP: Just—yeah. I mean . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . in love with it.

SL: Yeah. It seems like Ronnie put him on bass first.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Does that sound right? So . . .

KP: Well, yeah. He used him—he wa—he added him to the band.

But I think he was always gonna be a guitar player, but he was—
had a guitar player that wanted to get married and get off the
road.

SL: Right.

KP: And so I think Ronnie was trying to groom him to be the guitar
player, which he was, eventually. But when he first showed up,
I think he had him playing bass.

[02:04:09] SL: So did they rehearse at the Rockwood Club?

KP: All the time. That was the hardest work. And I mean, for all the
foolishness and fun and rowdiness of them it—kind of, unless
you knew—those guys rehearsed all the time. Ronnie worked
them like—I mean . . .

SL: Like boot camp.

KP: They rehearsed every day. All—I mean, in all—hour after hour
after hour. They rehearsed all the time. And that's how they

got good. And that's—I guess that would be probably one of the main reasons why they were so successful later on—that they got into the—putting the work in, you know, and they weren't just partying. Which, they were. But you know.

SL: Yeah.

KP: They worked hard at it.

SL: Well, the instruments . . .

KP: They got—and learned, you know . . .

SL: The instruments became an extension of themselves. It was like they just got so familiar with the craft that . . .

[02:05:16] KP: Yeah. And it's—you know, it was—they had good ears. They listened. They picked up other things from other venues and other bands and things and incorporated it into what they were playing. And you know, it was impressive that—they were better. Ronnie was never much—you know, he wasn't a part of the instrumental part of it, but he was the boss. He was the older guy, and he was getting the money. And so he was—they were doing, you know—and they—I think they loved doing it. So they didn't—you know, it wasn't . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . it wasn't like he was driving a—driving them to it. But they—but he did. He was responsible for making 'em—working

'em.

[02:06:13] SL: So did Levon always sing?

KP: Mm-hmm.

SL: So from the drum position, Ronnie would give him a . . .

KP: Uh-huh. And he . . .

SL: . . . song or two a set.

KP: Yeah. And he would sing harmony, too. He was a better singer than almost anybody I ever saw until I was—and maybe ever.

For his phrasing and just a unique, great ear, goo—great timing, phrasing.

SL: And still drumming.

KP: Always had it. Yeah.

SL: And so that's what's rare, is a singing drummer.

[02:06:51] KP: That's true. But he wasn't always a drummer. He started out playing a guitar, too.

SL: With his sister, Linda.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And the washtub bass.

KP: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

SL: Talent show.

KP: Tub bucket. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

KP: It was so funny.

SL: So . . .

KP: But they were good. I mean, Levon is a—he was a savant kind of, almost. He was a really gifted guy that could sing, and he was an entertainer as well. I mean, 'cause he enjoyed it so much. It wasn't—you know, he took right to it. And he was born to do it, I guess.

[02:07:29] SL: So when you were first getting to know Levon, did you ever travel back to the Delta and meet his folks or . . .

KP: I did. I knew his family, not early, early on, but I s—I don't remember—I remember going down to Helena. Or into Marvell. And to Shannon's, and you know, all of that. But that was not until—you know, I didn't go down there all the time because they weren't down there all the time.

SL: Right.

KP: But—and I knew—after—I forget when they moved up here, but they came up to Northwest Arkansas after, you know . . .

SL: Yeah. I thought—doesn't—isn't the story that Levon bought his dad and mom a house in Springdale?

KP: Yeah, it was ah—more like Tontitown . . .

SL: Tontitown?

KP: . . . over there somewhere close. Yeah, it wasn't right in

Tontitown, but out that way, yeah.

[02:08:4y] SL: So that was probably after Big Pink came out. And
I'm usually . . .

KP: Yeah, maybe.

SL: Maybe.

KP: I think he—back in those days—Don Tyson for instance, who was
a music—he was just struck like a teenager. He always was—
back before—I think before he got to be the—as big a
businessman as he was, he would have people coming in here,
salesmen and people that he was trying to get to—s . . .

SL: Court.

KP: . . . to buy his stuff, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . and wanted to interact with. And one of his big—I think it
was kind of unusual because he was one of the few people I saw
do it. He got those people to come down here, and then he
would get Ronnie and get all the guys, the band, and everybody
come over and party with these buyers and whatnot. And he
made a truly—that was one of the first times I'd seen that done,
and he made, you know—they fell in love with it too. They
couldn't wait to come back . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . and have fun. He knew every hairdresser in Northwest Arkansas and wound up with parties full of cosmetologists and musicians and—you know, just party, party, party. That was really—I can remember many of those parties. It was fun.

[02:10:36] SL: Yeah, I think maybe it was in the—one of our Hawkins interviews, he talks about Tyson actually covering the girls' cost of admission to . . .

KP: Oh, yeah. Yeah. And he was a big supporter and kind of a angel as you—in the theatrical sense to Ronnie and all the bands that he had. I mean, he was always financing that sort of thing. And had—I don't know what all those arrangements were, but whether it was advancing money to buy equipment or cars or whatever, Don got into that part of it and stayed in it for all his—you know, all of the—all the time that they were doing things. He could . . .

[02:11:35] SL: Now Ronnie talks about his cars at one point.

KP: He was a car freak.

SL: And they were faster . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . they were faster than the police cars. [*KP laughs*] And he could outrun them. And he claims it was more like a game. You know, he—they'd be chasing him for speeding, I guess. Or

bootlegging. I don't know what he was doing.

KP: Yeah, yeah. He was—you know, he's a colorful guy, and it's hard—it's sometimes it's hard to separate the myth . . .

SL: Myth, yeah.

KP: . . . from the actual deal, but he would encourage that as well. I mean, he was a—like Pecos Bill or somebody. [*SL laughs*] He was telling stories that may or may not be true or have some truth and a lot more embellishment, you know. He was just like that.

SL: Yeah, it was—he would claim that he'd get far enough ahead of the cop car to pull off, back up, and watch 'em go by, and then he'd pull up behind 'em. [*Laughs*]

KP: Yeah, well, that—I don't know whether . . .

SL: That's probably a stretch.

KP: . . . he'd seen that in a movie or what, but . . .

SL: Yeah, right.

KP: I was never in those, you know, chase scenes.

SL: Right.

KP: But . . .

[02:12:47] SL: So when Ronnie and the guys would get on the road, he'd be—he'd have a Cadillac or some kind of big car, and then would he pull a trailer with the . . .

KP: He did sometimes. They finally moved from that to like, big station wagons or things that they could put on top—put equipment on top of, but he usually—they weren't in buses or, you know . . .

SL: Right. Right, no.

KP: . . . like that. They were always in vehicles . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . pretty much in my memory.

[02:13:25] SL: So when they first started traveling, it was an upright bass, wasn't it? It wasn't even an electric bass.

KP: Uh-huh.

SL: And so that would be in the backseat of the car, or would they even . . .

KP: On top.

SL: . . . strap it on top?

KP: Yeah, could've been. They had those . . .

SL: Can you imagine?

KP: Well, they would have a big canvas case, you know, like you would have back in . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . those days, you know. You wouldn't—it wouldn't be up there . . .

SL: In the weather.

KP: In the weather, but yeah.

SL: That's amazing . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . to me.

[02:13:55] KP: I always loved that upright bass. When I was a kid, to kinda digress a little bit—in the summertime at the university, they had music lessons over there that you could take for free in the summer.

SL: Cool.

KP: And my dad says, "You need to go over there and learn how to play the Doghouse bass." But I wasn't big enough to, so I went over there and started playing a cello.

SL: [*Laughs*] Like a doghouse bass.

KP: I said, what a downer that was 'cause I went err, err, err, err.

SL: Oh.

KP: Instead of doo, doo, doo, doo.

SL: [*Laughs*] That's funny.

KP: Yeah.

SL: So you couldn't drop the bow and just act . . .

KP: There wasn't a lot of . . .

SL: Flexibility over there.

KP: Yeah, they have a [*SL laughs*—plucking the strings is part of playing a cello, but not a very big part. But that was what I wanted to do was—but I never did get—just playing it with a bow wasn't doing it for me, so I didn't go back. I might have done it a couple of summers, but I took other things, too. They had all kinds of stuff you could try, but that was—I can remember in the summertime, that was a good way to keep you out of trouble.

SL: Right.

KP: And you know, teach you something.

SL: So you'd straddle the cello. [*Laughs*]

KP: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] Pablo Casals, I was not.

[02:15:34] SL: Yeah, right, right. Well, so when they got on the road, when Ronnie and the Hawks—I mean, did you see that group formed? Ronnie and the Haw—Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks?

KP: Uh-huh.

SL: And they were officially the Hawks at some point?

KP: Yeah, well, Ronnie Hawkins, you know.

SL: Right.

KP: That was a natural. He—they introduced that pretty early on. The Hawks were the band.

[02:15:05] SL: Right. So did you ever travel that—I mean, I always heard that it was Conway Twitty that kind of gave 'em the road, the path to go up to Canada, that that was the circuit.

KP: I think maybe that is. He had success up there, and I think that's maybe where Ronnie got the idea, and I'm sure there were forerunners. You know, come up here. Because I think they were saying, "You'll do great up here because they are just hungry for rockabilly." You know, that was a big deal.

SL: That's right.

[02:16:43] KP: And that's what Harold Jenkins or Conway played when he started out. And he was from Arkansas, and you know, knew—that's probably true that that gave Ronnie the idea, and then as he—when he went up there, he would—they just loved him, and then that's when he started gathering—as the musicians he—that's a long way from home from Arkansas.

SL: Right.

KP: And some of those guys wanted to get married, or wanted to get home, got homesick, or whatever, so he started replacing—as they left. I mean, he wasn't replacing 'em, but they would leave, and he would—he had all of those kids, and there were so many of 'em like Robbie that just were just begging to get in there and do it, and they were willing to work day and night to

get good enough to do it, and that's, I think, how they
integrated all those Canadians into the bands was . . .

[02:17:44] SL: I just thought of the keyboard player. Stan Celeste.

KP: Uh-huh. He was from Buffalo, I believe.

SL: Right, so . . .

KP: Greg . . .

SL: . . . did he play at the Rockwood?

KP: Yeah, oh, yeah.

SL: Yeah?

KP: They came down several times a year and would play you know,
at the Rockwood and other places, Tulsa, Little Rock, or
whatever there. They'd put together a little—and they'e got—
they probably went over to West Memphis some or, you know,
wherever they could get a big enough payday and crowds to
warrant it.

SL: I got to work with Stan Celeste. I got to record him on the
album that Ronnie did at the . . .

KP: Formidable.

SL: Really unbelievable.

KP: Powerful.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And Ish, you member, or Donna, or somebody. I don't

remember how—I know his name. But I forgot. Anyway, a horn player, when Ronnie put some—he put . . .

SL: Put some horns [*unclear words*]

KP: He played a baritone sax and threw in some horns . . .

SL: No, I don't remember him.

KP: . . . in there. And those guys—I think he was from around Buffalo somewhere. Up there right across from the Niagara Falls there or something.

[02:19:01] SL: Okay, so parallel—let's shift to the—so Ronnie is making his way up to Canada. He's having attrition to band members getting married, which was like—I always heard that was one of his rules. You can't get married 'cause . . .

KP: Oh, no. It was because the—yeah, that was . . .

SL: That's the end of the band, yeah.

KP: . . . one of his main rules. You can't have—you gotta have the little girls wanting . . .

SL: Right, right. And once you have a wife, what—the women kinda ruin it, you know.

KP: Isn't that so sad?

SL: [*Laughs*] That's terrible, but that was what he was preaching at the time.

KP: Well, yeah, that was part of the show, you know. Young, good-

looking guys that were . . .

SL: That were not . . .

KP: Yeah, weren't married.

SL: Tangled up.

KP: They were—and you know, they did a lot of after-hours promotion as well.

[02:19:59] SL: [*Laughs*] So parallel, back here in Fayetteville and Springdale, you've got the Cate Brothers.

KP: Yeah, they were younger than me, even, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . by several years. And they play—they had their little band. I think they were kind of a country or bluegrass, almost, geared until they started—I think if I'm not mistaken, it'd be probably about the time the Everly Brothers did it—that . . .

SL: They were the Everly Brothers duo.

KP: . . . that's when they became . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . 'cause they had very tight harmony, and great . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . sang great together.

SL: Right.

KP: And that's when they started putting together bands. There was

another, McClellan, do you remember him?

SL: McClellan M.C.s—and the M.C.s, yeah.

KP: They were kind of a [*unclear words*]

SL: Tommy McClellan.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

KP: He was a horn player.

SL: Right.

KP: But . . .

[02:20:53] SL: My parents, at the UARK Bowl, they danced to both Tommy McClellan and the Cate Brothers. By then the Cate Brothers had a dance band at some point, but . . .

KP: Yeah, they . . .

SL: It was a—called the club—it was an organization called Couplers.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And they were . . .

KP: I think they were—that's a bowling term, I believe.

SL: Is that right?

KP: I think so. [*SL laughs*] But yeah, that was big—that was kind of a renaissance, or not a renaissance, but the beginning of local—and that my—I remember the—before that, there weren't—I wasn't aware of very many musicians like, you know, playing

around here. Most of the guys that, like, were playing out at the 71 Club or something—or back before that, it was called something else, but there was Jimmy McDonald, who was . . .

SL: Jimmy McDonald.

KP: And Rex Perkins, I think, was maybe a picker of some kind.

And—who else? Herman. He was the youngest, played drums for all of 'em, and they had little swing bands, not rock and roll by any means, but you know, were playing at these supper clubs and, you know, like that.

[02:22:21] SL: Yeah, it's just interesting that all of a sudden Northwest Arkansas kind of really gave birth to a bunch of different bands and music. I mean, by the time I came along, there were all kinds, the Del-Rays and [*laughter*]

KP: The Del-Rays, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Love it.

SL: [*Laughs*] You know, there—it was just a—I don't know. It just seemed to proliferate.

KP: Well, you know, rock and roll was a phenomenon. I mean, a tsunami. When that hit the, you know, all the old doo-wop and all the old, you know, the songs that—pop music was . . .

SL: That was on the radio.

KP: Yeah. That—when they started getting the rhythm into it, that's when . . .

SL: Everything changed.

KP: I mean, it changed. Lot of people. And you know, back then it wasn't hard to play three chords on a guitar, and . . .

SL: That's what it was.

KP: . . . and you know, and just start pounding on it, and you know, then you'd get a drummer and a bass player, maybe a piano, like Stan Celeste, you've got you something you can—you know, you'll get 'em on the floor.

[02:23:40] SL: Also you've got John Tolleson . . .

KP: Oh, yeah.

SL: . . . is happening at that time, too.

KP: Yeah, John was not a hardcore rock and roller. He was more a . . .

SL: Rockabilly. He was kind of rockabilly little bit.

KP: He wa—well, he got into it.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And I think—yeah, he's played with Ronnie some, and you know—but he was a . . .

SL: And they competed for the same fraternity and sorority gigs.

KP: Yeah. Yeah. But he didn't have the energy and the kick-ass

kind of quality of what Ronnie was doing.

SL: No, his big hit was Tennessee Stud, I think.

KP: Yeah. Jimmy Driftwood.

SL: Jimmy Driftwood, yeah, yeah.

KP: It's hard to turn that into a rock and roll anthem.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughs*] It is.

[02:24:25] KP: Later on when I was living in Mountain View, Jimmy was—he was the kind of the drivin' wheel over there for the folk center, you know.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Got a lot of the—you know.

SL: And he was great.

KP: Oh yeah.

SL: In that genre, he was great.

KP: Yeah. Led the way.

SL: He led the way, pretty much. I mean . . .

KP: Yeah. Well, he was—he had records, and he was, you know . . .

SL: He's popular.

KP: Very unique kind of a sound. He had a weird guitar that he played. He was . . .

SL: I'm not aware. What?

KP: Well, it just looked really strange.

SL: Looked weird?

KP: Looked like a lyre or a lute or something, but . . .

SL: Is that right?

KP: . . . it was a guitar, yeah.

SL: Wasn't like a cigar box guitar?

KP: Well, no, it—but it was very strange looking. It looked like an old English instrument. Like something from the Renaissance or something like you would hear at a, you know, court . . .

SL: That's funny. I need to see a picture of that.

KP: . . . you know, where . . .

SL: Let's take a break.

[Recording stopped]

[02:25:23] SL: We've gotten to your—we've introduced Hawkins into this story, and the bands and the clubs here in Fayetteville and some of the trips, and we've introduced a few Levon stories in general. And I ah—I think I asked you, and I'm just gonna—Sondra Tewes, who's writing a book about Levon, has submitted a bunch of questions, and I think it's best if we just go one by one, and if there's nothing to say, we just go to the next one.

KP: Okay.

SL: If . . .

KP: Yeah, I told her that I would, you know, try to help her out.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Like I say, I'm not gonna give up my—I told her that. These are—this is my life, my memories, my stories. And I value 'em, and I'm not gonna—I don't know Sondra Tewes from anybody, so I'm not looking to get her—either her approval or her disapproval.

SL: Right.

KP: But I told her that I'm not gonna start telling stories that might embarrass . . .

SL: Anybody.

KP: . . . me or my—that's something that my grandsons or my kids or, you know, or the world—I mean, I'm not gonna start talking about . . .

SL: Yeah, I don't think . . .

KP: . . . all the . . .

SL: . . . I don't think she's like that.

KP: . . . because—well, I hope not.

SL: I don't think so.

KP: Because I'm not gonna tell her anything that—except—you know, I could write my own book, like I say.

SL: Yeah.

KP: It's a—and I had—he and I had more adventures and fun and

interesting times than—being on tour, where you're playing, and then you're going and sleeping . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . and then you're gettin' up and driving somewhere, and you know, that's a pretty mundane over and over and over. You can talk about it and what maybe has happened, but Levon didn't have much of a life outside of music since he was fifteen or sixteen years old or, you know, in that area, until he died. I mean, he was—he didn't have a lot of time when nobody knew him, nobody knew who he was, and you're just out in the world, and he and I both were—are very outgoing, able to make friends anywhere you go, you know, and talk to anyone.

SL: Right.

KP: And that is—makes—you know, you're not stuck somewhere without knowing anybody. It's not a problem. We'd just go meet people and have adventures and have fun, and that's what we did, so . . .

[02:28:30] SL: Well, for Levon, it was all about making music, wasn't it?

KP: All his life, pretty much.

SL: All his life.

KP: But when he ran on to Ronnie, see, it wasn't him just

entertaining himself. And I think he loved it for most of the time—most of his whole life, especially when he got up there and had the rambles and stuff like that. He was playing with people that he loved and enjoyed and having fun, and he wasn't having to work, you know, every night, all night, and then go home and sleep and get up and do it all again. So I think—I wish—if his health had been better, he could have really enjoyed that time a lot more than he did, but when we were young and strong, you know, having, you know—it was just an adventure, and it was, you know, something I'll treasure forever, really. It was wonderful.

SL: It was a great gift for—that you gave each other.

[02:29:33] KP: It was great 'cause he got out of that jackpot he was in with Bob—he didn't—you know, they were playing every night, or not every night, but all the time in front of people that—Bob would go out and play a set of folk music or something. The Band would come out, and everybody'd start booing and if—you know, it was just bare one step from throwing shit at him. They hated him. "Oh, get out. You're ruining the whole deal. These electric instruments, get that out," you know. They just didn't know what the hell was going on. 'Cause Bob got really turned on by—he was released after that. He could still write his songs,

but he could put 'em with a band. I mean, you can imagine how much more complete and full and—the sounds became and, you know, when there's—it was just a—now that was truly amazing. I thought it was.

SL: Well, and the caliber of musicians . . .

KP: Oh, hell yeah.

SL: . . . that he planted himself in the middle of, it's just endless. I mean . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: Every position and every player could play multiple things and sing. I mean, there were characters, even.

KP: Oh yeah.

SL: They'd already developed their own stuff, really. I mean, you know, I mean . . .

KP: Yeah, that, too.

SL: . . . they were rock and roll, but at the same time, they had different voices, and they could play different instruments.

[02:31:00] KP: Oh, yeah. It was it was revolutionary in many ways, and people a lot smarter than me have written books and, you know, analyzed that shit to death, almost.

SL: Right.

KP: I mean, they made it—I don't know. It's more a—it's—there's a

lot more feeling than there is analytical analysis or, you know,
not to be redundant, but . . .

SL: Right.

KP: Analysis. You can think, talk, and think things till you go crazy,
but just feeling it and being there and, you know, being
immersed in it was enough to try—than trying to explain every
little nuance of everything you did, you know.

[02:31:51] SL: You know my first experience with Bob Dylan and
The Band was late, and they were playing in Kiel Auditorium in
St. Louis.

KP: I was there.

SL: And my brother Porter was going through chemo, and they were
scraping stuff off of his chest. He had leukemia. And so he was
going—we were taking him to Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. And
we got tickets to go see them and so—and we had great seats,
and when The Band came out and started playing, they weren't
really loud. It was just the perfect volume, and you could hear
everyone singing along with them in the audience. I mean,
everybody knew . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . every move, every lick.

KP: That's something, isn't it?

SL: And I remember when Garth stood up and left the organ,
everyone goes, "Ahh!" And then he comes out with a little tenor
sax or whatever, soprano sax.

KP: Accordion or whatever, yeah [*unclear words*].

SL: Yeah, he came out with the sax, and everyone just went nuts
from the first note he played on that thing. And I can
remember—so this is all very personal to me because, you know,
I . . .

KP: Yeah, last days of your brother.

[02:33:14] SL: Yeah, and also I'd met Levon and had some—a little
bit of time with him, just a little bit, but I love their music. I was
crazy about their music. And so they came to "King Harvest,"
you know, everyone that knows The Band knows "King Harvest"
and what a great song it is, and all the pictures and all the
different characters that sing in it, and it comes to the line
"Yellow moon, pretty soon, the carnival on the edge of town,"
and instead they sang—Levon sang, "Yellow moon, Porter's the
carnival on the edge of town," and it, you know . . .

KP: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . just brought us down. [*Laughs*] It was just unbelievable.

KP: Yeah.

SL: You know, and everyone turned around and looked at us, "Did

you hear what he just sang?" You know.

KP: Yeah.

SL: It was very, very personal and very thrilling.

KP: Sure.

SL: Just I'll never forget that the rest of my life. It was really—it—
for me, it kind of revealed . . .

KP: Yeah. They can do that, yeah.

SL: . . . who those guys were. I mean, to allow that to happen.
Anyway, so I think this is what we should do, just so I keep on
track and you keep on track on these questions—and some of
these questions, you've already answered. If you think of
something else that you want to add, we can do that.

[02:34:44] But so her first question is when you first heard
Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks. And you probably couldn't
remember that. You said . . .

KP: Well, I can remember. I mean, I maybe am not remembering
the very first time. But one of the seminal memories of Ronnie
and the Hawks—well, the Hawks. Oh, okay. Well, I can
remember Ronnie and the guys, the Fayetteville guys, in high
school. And then Ronnie and the Hawks—I don't have a real
single memory of the first time I ever heard 'em, but you know,
I'd heard 'em practice before, and you know, when they would

come down here, you would hear 'em practicing at the Rockwood, say, and so I don't remember that night probably as vividly maybe as some would because I was probably working.

SL: Right.

KP: You know, but I remember hearing all those songs, and that's a—like I say, I don't have a specific, one night that I was struck by . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . all that because I'd been listening to 'em practice and play, and I'd heard—you know, from the first time they ever came down here, I was working for Dayton, so I'd heard most of the times they'd play and . . .

SL: Well, you mentioned that they really practiced all the time, that they really worked hard.

KP: They did.

SL: And so we kinda covered that, I think.

KP: Yeah.

[02:36:37] SL: Okay. Your impressions of Levon when he f—when you first met him, personally and musically.

KP: Well, he was just—you know, we were—had—simpatico kind of—we—laughing and having fun, and he's—you know, we just kinda clicked as, you know, knowing what each—we were talking about

and found the same things funny and interesting. You know, it was just that kind of . . .

SL: Is there a . . .

KP: . . . a friendship, just starting like that. But he is so outgoing and friendly, and I've kind of—I'm kind of the same way. I mean, so we just kinda fell right into a comfort level and enjoyed talking about music and especially what was like, back then, the blues or Ray Charles or things that were really knocking you out at that point. That's what I remember most about—just being friendly and comfortable and interested in the same music, I guess.

[02:38:04] SL: You know, earlier—when we were talking earlier about your childhood and your growing up and around the dinner table, you guys practiced—you were kind of drilled on etiquette and how to introduce someone or how . . .

KP: Yeah. It's . . .

SL: . . . to relate with people. Your father really put you through the paces on how to be a gentleman, I would say.

KP: Exactly.

SL: And every time I had any—I was anywhere close to Levon, I felt like he was a gentleman, that he connected, and he knew how to reach out and how to listen and how to respond appropriately. I

just felt like . . .

KP: Yeah, his—but that was less formal in him because he was just, you know, interested in people, and the more—I don't know whether eccentric is the right—but more unique and—more unique kind of persons they were interested him more, and the odder, the less—you know, people that aren't trying to be a certain way or come on a certain way . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . or—but people who are being themselves and being open about it and don't worry about, you know, what kind of impression they're making. They're just being themselves. That was what he—he saw that and loved it, just because that's the way he is, too. He just—he wasn't—he's just as real as it gets, and I think he really appreciates that in others, and especially if they have a little kind of a unique, funny take on things and the way they see things, and they're not picky or mean or spiteful or envious. You know, they're just themselves and are happy to be themselves and let you be yourself and aren't just judging or trying to justify or anything like that, and that's what I always loved, and I think he loved it, too, 'cause it's—you know, just keep it real.

[02:40:36] SL: It reminds me of the lyric, "Just don't judge me by

my shoes."

KP: Yeah.

SL: You know? [*Laughter*]

KP: Yeah. Well . . .

SL: Which makes me think that line probably came from Levon.

KP: Yeah.

SL: I mean, Robbie probably got the credit for it.

KP: Yeah.

SL: But it sounds like something . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . from the South to me.

KP: Yeah. Oh, well, that—most of the—that early—all those early songs are strictly from, you know, his life and the people that they met, that, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . that they met down here. It was a whole new world for 'em. I mean, they just loved it.

[02:41:17] SL: So we kinda talked about personally—how he affected you personally and how you all clicked. But could you tell immediately that he was from somewhere else musically, that his source was—there was something about his abilities, not just drumming but the singing and the delivery and all that?

There was—I mean, when I first heard him, I . . .

KP: Well, he is grounded so completely in the blues and all of those—and then growing up down there on the Delta with all those old Black guys that—it was—you know, that was probably as strong an influence on him as anything else in his—that he had come by, although he'd heard a lot of country music and a lot of, you know, other styles, but that—the simplicity and the reality of the blues, especially that—because, you know, how it turned out to be, probably—I don't know if anybody realized it at the time, but those were the—that was the mother lode for . . .

SL: Well . . .

KP: . . . that music and . . .

SL: You know . . .

KP: . . . they—it was real.

[02:42:48] SL: That blues genre—right there in Helena, you've got the radio station that's the longest-running broadcast music . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . especially blues broadcast music, in the world. I mean, it goes—it—and he was actually—he would actually go to the studio and sit in the corner and watch that [*unclear words*].

KP: I'm sure he did. But the idea that we had all those radio stations back then, too, that you could get out of Nashville and . . .

SL: Chicago a little bit . . .

KP: Yeah, Chicago. Well, I don't know. Yeah, Chicago, too. That's where that music comes from, but we didn't get a lot of radio stations out of Chicago.

SL: No.

KP: But we did have those, you know, even out of south Texas. When they get on those Clear Channel . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . stations, you can—that's a good resource, too. [02:43:45] See, I can remember—it's about that time they start—get Elvis playing his first rock-and-roll, rockabilly stuff. That was, you know, some—you could tell something was going on.

SL: Yeah, I guess . . .

KP: That was . . .

SL: . . . what's his name?

KP: The earth was turning.

SL: Yeah. It was a combination of white and Black music . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . was breaking through that rockabilly stuff.

KP: And he had that influence as well as anybody . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . ever had because he was out there with the sharecroppers,

Black people playing and just like—I mean, it was just—wasn't anything . . .

SL: Yeah, I wa . . .

KP: . . . special or unique or foreign or scary or anything. It was just what he . . .

SL: It was home.

KP: Yeah, he was there, and he could do it just good as they could.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Always could.

[02:44:43] SL: I was reading in an interview of B.B. King. And he was listening to that Helena radio station when he was picking cotton in the fields.

KP: There you go.

SL: And so he started [*laughs*]*—*he started picking around on that, and it wasn't long before he could make more money . . .

KP: Yeah, playing music than he could . . .

SL: A couple hundred dollars . . .

KP: . . . sure, than . . .

SL: . . . in a weekend playing the juke joint than . . .

KP: . . . working . . .

SL: . . . making five, ten dollars a day picking cotton, and it . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . so it's a no-brainer for him.

KP: Yeah, and all the girls and . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] You can't forget the girls.

KP: . . . and, yeah. Well, yeah, you're not, you know, you're not busting it and worn, I mean, absolutely worn out at the end . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . of the day. You're—and I think—they said . . .

SL: Anyway . . .

KP: . . . "This is like finding money in the street, man."

[02:45:32] SL: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So you—we've already talked about seeing the Hawks at the Rockwood Club. We've answered that. All right, now here's something really specific, and I've never heard about this. She says, "I want to know if he heard anything from Levon about the trip Levon and Ronnie took to England in 1960 to appear on the *Boy Meets Girl* TV show. There's almost no information about this. It must have been quite an experience for two Southern boys." So then . . .

KP: I—yeah. I'm sure it was. Now you gotta remember that Ronnie's a lot older than Levon.

SL: Right.

KP: And he was doing—he was the man. I think he took Lee along just because he, you know . . .

SL: He could.

KP: Yeah. And he, you know, he likes—you know, Levon is such a character, too, that they are just even better together.

SL: Right. *[Laughs]*

KP: Yeah. But I don't remember—I don't think they were over there very long. That was a kind of over and back. But maybe they were over there a while. But I don't—and I remember Levon telling stories, you know, like it was pretty unique and crazy to be going to England, little old Arkansas boys going to England, and I'm sure—but I don't remember him oohing and ahing about it. He was saying it was a lot of fun and we s—you know, all that, I'm sure. But I don't remember anything that he told me specifically about what was going on.

[02:47:17] SL: I wonder if it was just a talk show or something, or if they actually played.

KP: It might have been one of those kind of like Dick Clark . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . deals.

SL: Right.

KP: Maybe one of—something like that. They were for teens and . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . the music. I'm sure they wouldn't have been there if it

wasn't for the music. And I think rockabilly was just hitting over there, and it was knocking 'em out, so . . .

SL: Right.

KP: But I don't remember him talking about playing over there. They . . .

SL: So it was probably an interview.

KP: It was just him and—I think just him and Ronnie went over there, but they—I mean, I'm sure they'd made the rounds and talked to a bunch of like music writers or, you know, talk shows, that sort of thing. But I don't remember him talking about playing over there.

SL: Yeah. What a great name for a show, *Boy Meets Girl*. [Laughs]

KP: Well . . .

SL: That sounds like the time doesn't it?

KP: . . . they turned Ronnie loose on the girls they . . .

[02:48:14] SL: Okay. She asked, "Did you see the Hawks when Roy Buchanan played with them?"

KP: I did not. No.

SL: Okay.

KP: I don't think he ever came down here, and if he did it was just briefly. And I don't remember him . . .

SL: Okay.

KP: . . . I don't remember that—anything particular about him. I don't, like I say, I don't know that he ever was—I know they played—he played with 'em for briefly, but not . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . not a long time.

[02:48:40] SL: So you've already asked—answered this one. "Did Levon tell Kirby how he felt about backing Dylan and what he told Kirby about his reasons for quitting the [19]65 tour?" I mean, that's in his book.

KP: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: I mean, he talks a lot about that.

KP: Well, he didn't like the music, for one thing. And he didn't like, you know, getting booed everywhere he went and people not appreciating what you're doing. Hell, I—he said, "I don't need this shit, you know? It's" . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . "I don't like it. I don't—you know, this is all—it's not for me." It was—you know, he played it, and he tried, but it just wasn't—it got to be a drag, I think. It was . . .

SL: Well, and this came to them after Ronnie had left. Ronnie had gotten married, and it was just Levon and the Hawks or . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . or . . .

KP: They were playing . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . working in New Jersey, I think . . .

SL: Right, right.

KP: . . . and you know, that was that. But it w—and Robbie had kind of—he and—had made the deal with Bob, and they were on—you know, I don't know. But I don't think—Lee was never really on . . .

SL: The same page.

KP: . . . on the same page with that. And they ha—they were, you know—he didn't wanna do it anymore.

SL: Yeah.

KP: He might have just been worn out or something like that. I don't know, but . . .

SL: Well, there's that.

[02:50:07] KP: He—Levon was not one to spill his guts about every little thing he felt about everything. He never talked about other people much. He wasn't—didn't hol—you know, he didn't gossip and snipe at others and say, "They're not—you know, they don't" . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . "treat me right or this or that or that." He just didn't—he just got all he wanted and said . . .

SL: That's . . .

KP: . . . "I'm taking off."

SL: . . . part of being a gentleman.

KP: Yeah, I guess.

SL: You just don't talk about it.

KP: Yeah. Yeah, that's true. He was not a gossip.

[02:50:39] SL: Yeah. She says she especially wants to know about Kirby's memories of traveling to Florida and New Orleans with Levon and then working on the oil rig together. Now you and I have talked about this, but I don't think we've done it in a formal setting. I—as I remember you weren't actually on the rig, you were supplying things to the rig, is that . . .

KP: Well, we went—I think we went out to California first . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . then we got back and went over to Memphis. We were thinking about getting a job at Stax or something, you know, maybe there with—and that didn't—that wasn't gonna happen. They had a—you know, we saw some great music over there, went to some great clubs, Black clubs especially, and saw some good stuff, but there wasn't any entrée. Those were tight. That

was Booker T. and the M.G.'s, and you know, those and the other. We didn't really have an entrée, and there wasn't that much—I was—looked around to maybe getting a job just at the studio doing something, but there wasn't really anything happening so—but we stayed around there a good while and saw a lot and had, you know, had some good times and had a lot of good chow and, you know, like that. Just kinda unwind. And then we decided we'd go down to Florida. And so we got on a bus, and you know, like I've always—I didn't know anybody down there. He didn't either. We just got—you know, took off to see what we—see what comes up. We got off a bus in Orlando—think was about the first place we landed and stayed any place, and that was interesting in that Orlando was a big agricultural town back in those days, and they had just bought the land to start Disney.

SL: Oh, my God.

[02:52:58] KP: And so we stayed at the Orange Hotel, and they had a long-term part of it in—out in the back one side that—where you could rent rooms by the month, I guess, or something, but we got—we just got a place to stay, moved in there, and started looking around. And we did get to play some down there just goofing. We—one of my favorite memories is we played at a

gay, Black [*SL laughs*], after-hours joint. Now then, that was a first. If you've never se—I mean, now, you've seen people like RuPaul and others like . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . that, I mean, but that was an eye-opener for us, and I was trying to play the bass a little bit. He was playing you know, drums, but we didn't—you know, we just had yuks over that. [*SL laughs*] I mean, that was more for fun. And then we did some other stuff. Had a little day w—labor. We'd get a job doing something somewhere and kind of—we went along that way but mostly just checking things out. We weren't so interested in working that we . . .

SL: Right.

[02:54:27] KP: You know, we were trying to pay the bills, but we weren't, you know, looking for a job. But while we were down there we—some groups came through. Like I remember Bobby—what was his last name? He was a hot, pop, white guy, Bobby—had a lot of big hits back then.

SL: Did . . .

KP: Lee knew him, and we went and hung out with them for—I'll think of his name here in a little bit. Bobby—shit. Well, anyway, so we would get together with—and a couple times bands

coming through that he knew, and we would go. And a couple times we were—sit in with them, play with them a little bit. And that was the first time I ever played a harmonica, you know, in a nightclub, you know. And that was fun. And—oh. I almost had it. Anyway, that was what we were doing. And we stayed around . . .

SL: Bobby Blue?

KP: No. It was—he was a white guy and . . .

SL: Bobby Vinton? Is there . . .

[02:55:38] KP: It could have been. It's somebody like him. But . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . I can see him now. He—Honey or . . .

SL: Yeah. That kinda rings a bell.

KP: I mean, they—he had a bunch of hot songs. And there was another guy that wanted Levon to come work for him and—that we spent some time with. He—and he had some—a bunch of good hit records, too. Lee didn't like his music that well, though, so he wasn't . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . up for it. And so we—like I said, I met—I found a girlfriend down there and was spending some time over at his—her place, and then we finally said, "Well, let's head on down to Miami."

We'd never been there, and we were gonna—you know, a lot of glamor and . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . heard a lot about it. So we went down there and moved into the YMCA on—in Miami Beach. That was pretty funny. [*SL laughs*] But we couldn't find any—they didn't have a music scene that we could find, really, that was anything we wanted to get into or even—you know, it was all white boys making, you know, this pop . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . little old candy pop kind of. So we didn't stay there too long. Then we looked in the paper. Maybe a week or two. You know, we were ready to get out of there. So we looked in the paper, and I got one of those drive-away cars. You know, Miami's a big port, and they had s—apparently had a car there that they wanted to ship to South America or something, but they had to get it to New Orleans instead of Miami. So they paid us to take this new car and drive it over to New Orleans.

SL: That's sweet.

[02:57:41] KP: Yeah, and they gave us a hell of a long time to do it. We jumped in that car. We were in New Orleans the next day almost [*SL laughs*] and had this car for about a week. Or maybe

not that long but anyway, that's how we—and we really struck it rich down there. New Orleans was great. We got a—had a—got a room down at the St. Louis Hotel in the Quarter. And I knew people down there 'cause my brother had lived down there, and that's how we got in the oil business because these—there was a couple from Oklahoma. You know, Oklahoma is a big oil . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . place, and they had moved down there to get into the oil business offshore and opened a company and were successful. And I got a job. We were staying at the St. Louis Hotel and tooting around the French Quarter having a ball listening to those music. Up—you could stay up all night doing that . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . and really hearing some good, you know . . .

SL: Good stuff.

[02:58:45] KP: Yeah. It was good. And I started working on a—what they call a pipeline—a casing crew, which is after they drill a hole, especially out there offshore, you take out—you drill the hole, then you pull all that gear out, and then they take a barge over there full of pipe from here to the street maybe in joints. Haul that way up in the derrick, screw it on, lock it, and lower it down. Pull up another one, screw it on, lower it down until, you

know, you're pretty far down in there, and that's—I was working for this family. They had these casing crews and I—they put me on one of 'em. It was funny because I didn't know anything about it but, you know, young and strong—it's, you know . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . just getting out there, and they kinda treated me like the kid. And I worked quite a while on that. And Lee got some—I think he was working at—he worked at a restaurant, maybe, doing something. And then he worked—he got another little job doing something. But we were—it got to where we would play—we were walking down the street, and here's this little Black guy tap dancing, and I hauled out a harmonica and started playing with him. And he started dancing, and people started giving him money, and he says, "I'll meet you back here tomorrow night, and we'll do this again." And you know—and we started making a little money that way. [03:00:30] Lee was—might be playing a little bit of guitar or something. And then we ran into a couple of girls from New York and fell in love, or they moved in kind of. They wanted to stay with us, and so we may—had that little romance going, and you know. We lived in this St. Louis Hotel, which was full of strippers, hookers, and some of the strangest people you had ever met. [SL laughs] And Levon took to it.

You know, he fit right in there. He loves eccentric, odd people. And he, of course—you know, we both—you know, strippers are great. The hookers are great. I mean, if you're not a John, they're . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . they were really fun. Anyway, the—I think the best one we found down there was a guy that lived on—in this hotel, which you went upstairs and down a hall and up another. You know, how they cut up some of these buildings? It was the weirdest layout I've ever seen. No lobbies or anything. It was . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . all by the week or month or something like that and . . .

SL: Halls and doors.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[03:01:52] KP: And this guy up there, his name w—we called him Commander Jack. He was—he thought he—and Levon did it. He had encouraged him and encouraged him till this guy finally I—just over the edge. He now becomes a double naught spy. He's wearing a trench coat, and he's—he claims—now he says he's working for Israeli intelligence. And he's there to buy a ship to take it back to Israel. And this all happened over a time. I

mean, we were there for months. And we'd be walking down the street. Here'd come Jack. He'd look, and he says, "Pretend like you don't know me." as he went by, you know, that.

SL: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

KP: I mean, like living in a—just a—it was amazing. He would call us down to his room. He had maps that he'd got from the—I don't know, somewhere, you know.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And he was plotting all of this shit, and we were gonna be on the crew. And you know, you could almost take him seriously 'cause he wasn't a idiot, but then he wanted the girls to come and be on the crew too, you know. It was all just fantasy of course.

SL: Right.

[03:03:14] KP: And so that was about as fine a time as I've had, and it was so crazy. And we—these girls were working in the Quarter, two sisters. One of 'em in the back bar. We'd go over there at happy hour, and they'd feed you red beans and rice as a complimentary dish.

SL: That's how you lived.

KP: We'd go in there about five o'clock in the afternoon. Nobody there. Hell, we could eat a bucket full of that stuff and drink beer on the house, you know, or drinks or whatever. And you

know, then—well, we ran out of money I guess. So then I have some—I'd been working on this casing crew.

SL: Right.

[03:04:00] KP: I've had to go out and do that, but I was having to—because those people go out and do this work at all times of the day or night, you got to be ready to go, and if they—if you catch them at five o'clock and they say, "Well, we got to go right now." And it's all over on the other side of the river so you got to get across the . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . Mississippi there to do it, and at five o'clock or at eight o'clock or to nine or so or five to seven or whatever, you can't get across there 'cause of the traffic and all. So I got anoth—a little room over there across the river just to—in the back of some guy's house, kind of a garage apartment type of deal. I stayed over there when I knew I was going out, but I missed a couple of jobs, and they said, "Hey, I love you, but unless you're gonna stay over here and be ready to go, you're making us short." So I said, "Oh, I understand perfectly." And I apologized, but I'm not—I ain't living over here. I'm living in the French Quarter with all these crazy people and girls. I—and then I made a mistake of bringing a girl back with me a couple times

and they—that was strictly no. So I—we—I said, "Well, I got to make another arrangement." So we got a job on a pipeline barge, which was—that was—you're on this big barge, and there's a spool on the back end of it that wraps six-inch pipe at least. And what they do is they build storage tanks like you've seen driving by, big old tanks . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . that they store fuel in. Well, they build one, oh—those up on pilings and then—and they build them in the middle, say, of about four or five wells. And then they take—they dig tunnels on the floor. It's not very deep out there. And then you un-round, unwind that pipe and put it down in that fren—trench and then they come to the leg of one of those storage tanks. They have to make a well there, come up, and then work it. You know, that's basically what you are is connecting all these wells to the storage tanks.

SL: Storage tanks.

[03:06:41] KP: But it's tough, and you do it—it's like most of the oilfield stuff. You don't go in there and work nine to five. You do the job until it's done. I mean, once you start, you don't stop. You take a little time off to go eat, and they got two crews, so you're—you get some time off . . .

SL: A shift.

KP: Yeah, a shift, but even when you ta—have to go eat or anything on this like probably ten, twelve hours a day, whatever, you're just quick and then back. And most of those, those were characters too. We loved that because they were, if anything, even weirder and wilder than the people that were living in the St. Louis Hotel 'cause most of 'em were wanted somewhere. [SL *laughs*] They would get offshore where nobody could . . .

SL: Mess with 'em.

KP: . . . mess with 'em. [03:07:39] And they didn't ask for any real background or anything. But we worked out there for a while till I think maybe—one of the best parts of that was the, I guess, storms maybe. Couldn't get out on the Gulf, so we rode this barge they sent back up to New Orleans through the Intracoastal and all that way. We got to go from the Gulf all—and it's a long way from there to New Orleans. You go up through there seeing all of that, the wildlife, and the, you know, alligators, and all of that stuff. And then come back and that was—that takes several days up and several days back. So we were doing that. That was fun, and we got—made a lot of money 'cause you're out there two weeks on and two weeks off.

SL: Can't spend it.

KP: No. And then you've got enough money to go back to town and party and do all that and then come back. [*SL laughs*]

[03:08:41] Anyway, we finally—I think it—because it got so—seems like it was hot and maybe the bugs and, you know, and there was a weird—like it gets calm before a storm and stuff like that. We finally just got all we wanted, say, "Let's go back to New Orleans. F this. I'm—you know, we've done this." So then we went back to New Orleans, and we're back in the St. Louis and doing our deal. And that's when I guess Rick. . .

SL: Called.

KP: . . . caught up with Levon and says, "You need to come on back up here." I'm thinking that that happened in New Orleans, but maybe we had started back to Memphis. Anyway, we went back to Memphis to—we were bunking over there with Mary and Anna.

SL: Oh yeah.

KP: On the way down and when we came back, and that's—maybe that's when the fan—phone call came and said, "You better get on up here." And so Levon says, "I'm gonna—I'll, you know, talk to him." And said, "Okay, I'll come check it out." And he says, "I'm going back up there, and I'll call you when I get settled in. And get you—you know, I'll figure out something. We can"—you

know, we were partners by then and . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . had been for a long time and said, "I'll figure something out." So he went on back up there, and he called me up in a little bit and says, "Yeah, come on up." So that's what I did. I went up there, and they wanted a—they wanted—I was ostensibly the road manager. They weren't playing anywhere. [SL laughs] They were living in Big Pink practicing and playing with Bob and playing their own stuff too. So that's kind of how I got to Big Pink, and we stayed there until finally they hired—now then they were ready. We played some with Bob. [03:10:44] I remember we went down and played at the Madison Square Garden with a—it was a tribute to Woody Guthrie, I believe, and it was both a music and a some kind of half-assed dramatic or, you know, act—there were actors involved . . .

SL: Right, some kind of script.

KP: . . . and also it was music. Anyway, went down there, and that was where I got to play the piano at Carnegie Hall. [SL laughs] And I would tell people that, and they'd say, "Oh, man, you must be really great." It was a sound check of course. [SL laughs] We were going "Dun, dun-dun"—getting levels all around . . .

SL: Right. Right.

KP: . . . you know. I was just sitting there, but that was funny. And then—and we got to go over to some big theater—big theatrical stars and hang out. We were staying at the Chelsea Hotel, and you know, we had . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . we would come in and out from Woodstock to do different things, but then we did some recording there in New York. That would be coming back into town and then back up to Big Pink. [03:12:00] And by that time, I think Robbie had gotten a house in Woodstock and wasn't staying at Big Pink. And then they started b—everybody started looking around for—and Rick and I got a house that we shared in town. And then we went to—then they recorded the stuff they wanted to there in New York. And now they're with Capitol Records so—and you know, they wanted us to come out to California and record the rest of the album out there, which we did. Went out there, and we moved into a real nice motel that—where musicians stay. I remember people like—oh, a bunch of guys that you would know. Bobby Goldsboro was that guy's name.

SL: That was his name. All right.

[03:13:01] KP: Anyway, so we stayed out there, and then we got a house, big old Spanish style house. I think—I forget who lived

there at one point, but now it was . . .

SL: Was that Sammy Davis?

KP: Maybe, but he wasn't around, but . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . I remember it was across the street from where Bela Lugosi's house was, and it was a really strange place, big old place. And so we moved in there and started recording. And it was—that was fun. But by this time, this was a big-money deal. I mean, there were big business involved and a lot of heavy-duty executives calling the shots, and it got to be where, you know, it wasn't as much fun as you would think. You were just, you know, doing that. And then we—but we finally got through. [03:14:07] And they were going back to New York to mix it, and so we drove back, me and Richard. I remember we stopped in Santa Fe and had a big party with some people, and then we drove back into Fayetteville. And we're staying up at the lake house at . . .

SL: Tyson's.

KP: . . . Tyson's, and they got ready to go on back up there. And I kind of had something to do around here that I needed to take care of, so that's kind of where I got off at that point. And they, you know, they were, it was such—it was big business now. I

mean, it—they weren't—they were under contract. They were doing all of this stuff that, you know, required them living up to cer—I mean, there wasn't—it wasn't playing around at Big Pink or getting—playing dominoes with Bob. [03:15:06] And I remember I had—when we were up there, it was fun. Went over to his house for Thanksgiving dinner, you know, and they—and we had very interesting times. Bo—Albert Grossman, you know, who was managing . . .

SL: Bob's manager.

KP: . . . Bob, Mary, Paul—Peter, Paul and Mary, and Richie Havens, and all of those East Coast bunch of big names. He brought this bunch of Indian street musicians from Mumbai or something. Moved 'em in, even brought 'em over there to Woodstock, and that's when he—I think—I'm sure he invested in it, but Sally was running that Bearsville—started up this Bearsville stir—Studio where . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . they were gonna start recording with them, and we got to be real tight with 'em. They'd come out to Big Pink and they—man, the main ingredient for them was that, I mean, killer hashish. And we would go—they would come out and put down these Indian rugs on the floor, and everybody'd get good and

mellow, and they would start playing these weird-ass instruments. And then the guys would start playing with 'em. And let's see. Who was that? This guy, horn player—Charles Lloyd, do you know who he is?

SL: I know that name.

[03:16:39] KP: Anyway, he's—he was a pretty strong guy. He was originally from Memphis, and he and the boys got to be tight, especially with Robbie. Was good friends with Charles. And so he would come up there and f—and they would be making some wild-ass music. And I remember it was wintertime, and about Christmastime they're going up to Toronto. I don't know where—whether Levon was or not, but I went up there to Toronto. And we had spent some time there, and then Garth was going home. He lived in—I forget. Stratford, someplace off.

SL: Right. That sounds right.

KP: And his mother and father were very—were educators, professor type, and they had—you know, that's—so I went with—home with him, and that was great. We spent about a week out over there talking to them and—you know, with his folks and just kind of kicking back. And then, anyway, after all of that I kind of decided I was gonna go down to Mexico and look around and s—maybe write some music and, you know, play a little bit down

there. So I got on a train in Nuevo Laredo, one of those big old Pullman trains.

SL: Right.

[03:18:13] KP: And we got off. And crazy Charlie Young was in Dallas working for a record company. He was supposed to be an A&R man—or not an A&R man, but somebody who's looking after the talent when they would come in.

SL: Right.

KP: And I was living there in Dallas. And the funny part of that was when Jimi Hendrix came in to do a series of shows, a couple in Dallas and then maybe a couple in Houston, Charlie was driving him around and kind of looking after him. Well, that was a mistake [*SL laughs*] by the record people 'cause he and Charlie had . . .

SL: Had too much fun?

KP: Yeah, and they got lost in the shuffle. I think he might have missed maybe one of the shows.

SL: Oh.

KP: And then—and they were fucked up all the time. And so I think they were encouraging—or I don't know if they out and out fired him or whether he quit before they could fire him, but he had screwed it up so bad that he—his—they—you know, he was—

that job was toast. So he said, "Well, I'll go with you down to Mexico." He had bought this brand-new Thunderbird, turquoise and cream. [*Laughter*] And his dad was just beside himself, and you know, he never got along with his dad very well anyway. So he gave up his—let the car go back to the dealership. He had torn it up, probably. Anyway, so we went down there to San Antonio to the—they were having the Expo, World Expo down there. And stayed around there a few—several days, maybe a week. Went on, caught a bus down to Nuevo Laredo, which is a big border town down there, and Nuevo Laredo's the Mexican counterpart to that. Got on that train and took off. God, it was one of those Pullman deals from the [19]40s or something. Huge cars, all that red plush velvet and everywhere we . . .

SL: All the lacquered wood and . . .

[03:20:27] KP: Oh, yeah, and it was—yeah, that was interesting to go, and you could look through—you go through those little towns, some of 'em bigger than others, but then it was just a slum or something, but then you would leave that and be out into the jungle, almost, going through the—wouldn't see any roads or anything.

SL: Right.

KP: Or any—you know. So we got—and got down there to Mexico City, got off the train, walked right around the center of town, went and got a hotel room. Stayed there about a week and looked at the zoo and the, you know, and the national—it was like their version of the Smithsonian, and the national zoos and the—all the—like, the botanical gardens and stuff like that, a lot of stuff. And it was—I loved it. It was interesting to look at that. But after a week or two of that, we got on another bus, went to Acapulco. Just got off—and Acapulco is—has two—has the tourist side and the—and not only the tourist but the international, white, you know, Hollywood stars, and all that is on one side. And where the Mexicans themselves go on vacation and the, you know, the kind of the Mexican side, and that's over there where those—the cliff—got cliff divers and stuff . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . are there.

SL: Right.

[03:22:16] KP: So we got a room there, and we—and were having a lot of fun there. And we—after a while—I don't know. I can't remember how we discovered this place, but about, oh, I don't know, ten kilometers or fifteen or so—it's—you know, I don't know how far that is, ten miles or so or maybe a little more.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Out north of Acapulco, we found a place on the beach where this old man—his name was Juan Silvete. He had taken an old kind of estancia, a big, fine, white house on the beach. Balconies upstairs, and it had different rooms. They didn't even have walls. They just, you know, half walls and the rest screens, fans. And they had a little—he would feed—his wife, he and his wife, and they had some groundskeepers, I guess, there, or something. Palm trees everywhere. Beautiful beach. But it was treacherous, and that's why it wasn't more populated because the riptides were so strong there that, you know, you . . .

SL: You couldn't swim.

KP: Not much, no.

SL: Right.

[03:23:42] KP: So we moved in there by the week or the month or something. And that's where we stayed, and we would go into town for concerts. I remember we saw Cannonball Adderley . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . and his brother played up there. And you would see—you know, you would think—because over there, they're taking pictures of Hollywood stars in ermines and, you know, tiaras, almost. We're over here in, you know, the other part, or in the

same deal, but you know, not in—but all the lights like this, and people taking flashbulbs and all that stuff. See great bands. We saw some great bands over there. And there we were. And I'm trying to think—oh, and we had some records. Charlie had brought some records with him.

SL: Right.

[03:24:41] KP: And we found a bar over there that almost give us—if we would—we brought our records over there and played 'em, and those—that guy said, "Oh, yeah, if you come in here and bring those records, I'll give you—I'll feed you. I'll, you know"—and we—that was our—kind of our . . .

SL: Your gig.

KP: . . . our deal. We got—they, you know, knew us and loved us and all. So and I can remember going to some of those after-hours joints that—on that side of town. It was not easy, but we—I had a couple of—I don't think Charlie went with him. But this guy I saw all the time, he was a waiter somewhere. He says, "You wanna go after hours, and I'll take you down here to these—some of the nightclubs that I go to. It's, you know, good music, and it'll be fun." I went down there, and we hooked up with a couple of women who looked like sumo wrestlers. [SL *laughs*] And there were people there, come over there and start

giving me shit. Those girls would say, "I'll kick your ass in a second. You get your ass"—you know, kinda like—[babbles] But they—those girls were takin' care of me. And anyway, it was great. And then I think we went to town for another concert. I forget who was playing that night, somebody good. And right in Acapulco, there's a fort that's over this—the—you know, that Acapulco Bay was, I suppose, always a—they had a big fort up on top of big parapets, you know, these palisades. Built rocks going down and then out and then down and then out . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . like that. Well, we call—crawl—you know, it wasn't straight up, about like this. We just kinda shinnied up there. It wasn't quite that bad. And I got about on the middle one, and we pulled out a doob, and we're gonna—looking at the—good smoking dope down there.

SL: Right.

KP: Of course, you can imagine.

SL: Right.

[03:27:07] KP: And we're looking out over the beautiful night, the lights, and the bay, and everything. Charlie says, "I'm going up to the top. Come on." And I said, "Well, shit, I ain't going up there. That's a fort, man. There's"—I mean, it's not a empty

fort. There's patrols coming up through here every now and then. You know. "Nah, I'm going up there, man, and you can see it all from up there." So he went up there. I'm sitting there, grooving, maybe drinking a beer. I don't know. I hear this, "Halto! Halto! Manas ariba!"

SL: [*Laughs*] Oh, no.

KP: And the patrol has busted Charlie. He's up there smoking and drinking or whatever he's doing on government property. Idiot. I told him not to do it. Well, as soon as I heard that, I bailed. I jumped over that and ran, man, bam, hit that street, and I'm walking, and I mean, I'm out of there. And I went around to the fort where the entrance was, and I said—I was talking to somebody over there. I said, "Me and my friend were taking a whiz over there, and he went up on the wall, and he never came back, and I wanted to check on him." They said, "Oh, you know, come back in the morning." So I came back. I went on home, came back in the next day. They've got Charlie in jail.

SL: Hmm.

[03:28:42] KP: And I guess they'd turned him over to the city. But this Juan Silvete, his son was I think maybe the sheriff or, you know, a lawman, and they loved us out there. So Mama Silvete calls up her son, says, "Hey, you gotta get Carlos Loco out of the

jail." [SL laughs] And they'd already taken his—all the money he had, and but I think he had a ring or maybe . . .

SL: Oh, yeah.

KP: . . . something that he really treasured. And so we get him out, and we're trying to—we gotta raise some money to pay his fund or something like that, and he says, "I'm getting that ring back."

SL: Oh.

[03:29:33] KP: Well, he goes back to the police station now. And they rearrest him and find a joint in his wallet. So he's back in jail.

SL: Oops.

KP: I mean, idiot. It's—you know. And I'm saying, Goddamn. So now we're out. I mean, we gotta get some—now they've got something on him that they don't, you know, they—they're gonna put the screws in him, and that's when we got hold of Paul III or somebody . . .

SL: [*Unclear words*]

KP: . . . right there in Dallas.

SL: Yep.

KP: And he said—they—Dash was down there, and he said he wanted to come down to see us anyway. And he comes down, and we finally get Charles out of that, but now it's—you know,

we've gone through most of our money. We weren't working down there. [03:30:34] So that's when we met this—we met a bunch of kids from Mexico City, students, that as—about half of 'em were Americans and the other—one of them was the son of the chief interpreter. He was a Mexican that lived in Queens. His dad worked at the UN, I think, for Mexico, and he spoke, you know, English perfectly. So that's when they came down, and they were looking to score some big weed. They had a guy with 'em had a Chevy Camaro, I think, and then the others had a Volkswagen bus. Well, I had known—I had met—I had known enough—I'd made friends with these people that they said, "Well, if you help us, you know, we'll cut you in on a deal," and I—no money, and I said, "Well, I'll enter—I'll go talk to my friend." He says, "Yeah, I can do that. Let me go up in—further up into Guerrero, and I'll get up in the mountains, and I'll make—I'll get in touch with my guy, and then I'll come back and tell you." And then we would go up there and get it when that—when they arrange it. We went—he came back, says, "You know, go up here and meet these guys," and there was one guy. He was a big—he was a good-size guy like me. He was at least as big as me, maybe athletic kinda looking guy. We went up there. [03:32:16] Here's the great story. [SL laughs] We

meet these two guys. They say, "Okay, come on. We're going—take you up here to get this stuff." Well, we go up there a long way. Now we're out in the country. We park at this little, you know, like get—pull off the road here. Now we gotta walk. And we start walking up into the hills, and I'm getting a bad feeling, and I talked—turned to him. I said, "Can you handle yourself? You know, I think that—I don't like the looks of this, and I think we ought to think about blowing this off 'cause I don't think these guys—I think these guys are gonna take us up here and rob us and kill us or something." So that's what we—we said, "Had enough. We're going back. This don't look right to me." And so that's what we did. They tried to hold us up, but they were afraid to, you know, do anything. I think, you know, we could've handled them. Anyway, we came back to town. He says, "I'm sorry." So he said, "I'll"—I think it was the same guy. He said, "I know another guy," and so he went up there and negotiated a couple of gunny sacks this big around. I bet five feet tall, two of 'em, we bought. [*SL laughs*] Now we had to get 'em into—we put 'em into—one in the backseat of that Chevy Camaro in the back and the other one in that Volkswagen bus. We went back to Papa Silvete's about midnight, loaded up, and split for Mexico City, where they had a house up there. And

that's where they—we—they were going to process this dope.

Turn it into nothing but bud, and press it real tight . . .

SL: Hmm.

KP: . . . and put it into these plastic containers, stick it in this big trunk. And some—Charlie, idiot till the end, he didn't wanna do that. So he took his. He had, like, he had a—maybe a kilo. He stuck it in his pack or his bag or somethin', and they got on a bus for—and we're gonna go out of the country, way up in Arizona somewhere or something, way up there. Well, they got up there to the border. They busted him. I mean, busted hi—the guy he was with, and Charlie just abandoned the rest of it and got out of there, but he—you know, and came back to Fayetteville. By that time, I had—they had shipped—air freighted this stuff back to Washington, DC, where Greg lived, and we went ahead and went down to Oaxaca, to the mountains, for the mushrooms. We lived down there. [SL laughs] We—in the back of that Volkswagen bus. We got down there and parked, had to go over a bridge of this little river, you know, maybe as wide as this room. And then walked a couple of miles up the hill, the mountain, to these little village, and there—we had a DayGlo—one of those fake blankets, looks like a sheepskin, but it's dyed . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . lime green or something like that. [*SL laughs*] That—they'd never seen anything like that, and they gave us I think a week or may—and it turned out to be two weeks rent and board, room and board . . .

SL: Wow.

KP: . . . for that blanket, for that—you know, it was back—in the back of that Volkswagen bottom. We hadn't hardly got in there before somebody shows up and says, "Are you the guys that are—is that your Volkswagen bus down there?" Said, "Yep." "Somebody stole it." It was gone.

SL: Oh, no.

[03:36:28] KP: So the guy that owned it, he said, "Well, I gotta go deal with this. You all—why don't you all just stay here, and I'll s—I'm going back to see if I can recover the bus, and I'll be in touch, you know?" So we stayed there, eating beans, drinking that coffee. It was just picked off the vine [*unclear words*].

SL: Now who is with you here?

KP: There was a girl I was with, and she was from, I think, up there around Washington or something, and there was another guy, and maybe Greg, I don't know. There was two or three of us that were . . .

SL: Okay.

KP: . . . still there and then a couple that left and went to get the—
try to find—and it took them about two weeks to recover that
bus.

SL: But they got it back?

KP: They did it get back.

SL: Miracle.

[03:37:26] KP: Yeah, miracle. It was—been used a little bit, but it
wasn't bad. And so that's when we went back to Mexico City,
and then we took off for Vera Cruz. We were gonna kind of
wander our way out of the country and head on back. By that
time, I'd been there—I think Charlie was down there maybe over
six months or something, and I was probably almost a year by
that—time all that. We got home, and it was—and when—I
remember when I got to the border or somewhere pretty close
to the border, I heard that first time—Big Pink, somebody had an
album up. I heard that. Man, it was great. And I also learned
that somebody'd shot Bobby Kennedy, hell, about six months or
before or maybe longer. Never heard anything about that. I
was way down there in the jungles of Oaxaca. That's way down
there in South Mexico. So I—and they let me off in—I think—
kinda think maybe it was Conway. They were headed over on I-

40 to Memphis and going back up that way. Or I-55 maybe to St. Louis or up that way. And I just hitched on up . . .

SL: To Fayetteville.

KP: To Fayetteville. Staying there.

[03:39:03] SL: So when you heard Big Pink, did it remind you of the stuff they were working on in Big Pink? Did it have the character of . . .

KP: Oh, yeah. Well, they—the—we had been—all the time up there when they were working with Bob on his stuff, they were also working on their stuff. So they'd been playing this stuff for a long time. And then finally they had perfected that—you know who John Simon is?

SL: Yeah, I do.

KP: The kinda producer, yeah.

SL: Yeah, he's a producer. Yeah.

KP: He came up there and was working with him on the production, and he went to California with us, too, but he did a hell of a job there. And but, you know, it was just beautiful.

[03:39:50] SL: So—well, first of all, it was totally different direction as to what was being played on the radio at the time.

KP: Yeah.

SL: I mean, I think In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida was saturating the radio.

KP: Yeah.

SL: You know, at—what was that? A seven-, eight-minute . . .

KP: Yeah. I got you.

SL: . . . brainless, endless jam kind of stuff, but the—I think it was Eric Clapton that said that that is what saved rock and roll, that album.

KP: Yeah, I remember.

SL: It pulled this—the waves, radio waves away from . . .

KP: Yeah, yeah.

SL: . . . the direction that rock was heading, and it reestablished, you know, a . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . a sophisticated rock and roll, and it . . .

KP: And the idea that, you know—they were accordions and all of these weird-ass instruments that were on those records, and yet they fit right seamlessly together, and it was a seminal—you know, definitely a big deal.

[03:41:06] SL: So I guess the anthem off that became "The Weight."

KP: Yeah, probably. That was when they—there was a bunch of good songs.

SL: Bunch of good songs on that. [crosstalk 03:41:20]

KP: Good—and th—"Chest Fever."

SL: "Chest Fever."

KP: "The Weight." "Dixie Down."

SL: "We Can Talk" about it now.

KP: Yeah, the "Rag Mama Rag."

SL: Rag, yeah.

KP: All that stuff.

SL: Yeah.

KP: I don't know if that was all on the same album but . . .

SL: No, it wasn't, but . . .

[03:41:33] KP: But that was what they had been working on all that time. And then just as I got back to Fayetteville, Greg called me and says, "You better come on up here." He had gotten back to Washington, DC, and gone out there. I told you where his neighbor up the street was the guy, you know . . .

SL: Handling the stuff he sent from Mexico.

KP: Handling the freight. Helped him load it up. [*SL laughs*] And that's when I went—got up there, and got little Bonnie Diamond, an old girlfriend of Levon's, gorgeous little girl, lived in Bethesda. Rick folks.

SL: Yeah.

KP: You know. And I went out there and stayed with them, you

know, met him and stay—you know, didn't stay with 'em, but went out, went over for dinner. And she was hanging with—I had all that dope. And she was—she had all these friends, you know, rich girl friends. She moved that stuff like you couldn't believe. [*SL laughs*] And you know, she didn't want any of the money or anything. And I took her with me. After we had kinda sold that off, I went up to New York where my buddy Alberto lived, and I had some more up there, but I got ripped off up there.

SL: Uh-oh.

[03:43:01] KP: It wasn't bad. It was maybe, I don't know, a pound of . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . something I took up there, and I was gonna let him deal with it. He wanted some of it, and some friend of his took off with it, and I couldn't find 'em. I didn't know, you know, [*unclear words*].

SL: Not worth it.

KP: And Bonnie and I went up there to—back up to Woodstock to see Levon. You know, I hadn't seen him in a while, a long time.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And so we went up there, and he was not in a real good place,

but these—he had gotten—he was into s—little deeper into it . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . by then, and so that's . . .

SL: So . . .

KP: Kinda . . .

SL: I thought . . .

KP: . . . eased on out.

[03:43:53] SL: Right. When he was first—when he had had it with the Dylan thing and the crossover from folk to rock and all that stuff, did he just call you up and say, "I'm leaving. What do—you wanna get together?" Or how did you all connect?

KP: He came back to Fayetteville.

SL: He came back to Fayetteville?

KP: He came back through here, and he want—he needed to go out to Los Angeles because he'd been living out there. Met a friend of theirs, a guy named Sandy Konikoff. I don't know if you remember him.

SL: No, I don't know.

KP: He was a drummer, and he had played with Levon and them at one point, and he had been . . .

SL: Oh.

KP: They had put together . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . a band called The Gentle Soul. It was kinda like a Mamas and the Papas deal. He was living in the ch—or into the Chateau Marmont out there in Los Angeles. They were, you know, fronting it, paying—the record company's paying all the bills and putting them up and feeding 'em and all that. And so we went up there and stayed with him. They worked on that for, hell, I bet it was six months [*laughs*] and never produced anything, and it finally, you know, just blew it up and—but he had a real nice little Triumph motorcycle out there. And we had borrowed Paul Berry's wife's—Margaret . . .

SL: Miriam.

KP: . . . Margaret . . .

SL: Oh.

KP: . . . Margaret Spears—or Margaret—that was his—Margaret Berry, I guess, at that point, I don't know.

SL: Yeah.

KP: Anyway, she had this real slick little Chevy Malibu, hot, one of those 460 . . .

SL: Four on the floor, 442.

KP: . . .horse—yeah, 442, something like that. We took off in that and went out there and saw all the old timers from Tulsa, Jimmy

Markham and Indian Ed Davis and all those guys that went out when Leon Russell went out there.

SL: Right.

KP: All those Tulsa boys, and we knew 'em all. You know, Jim Keltner and Radle . . .

SL: Was . . .

KP: Carl Radle. They all wound up playing with Mad Dogs and Englishmen, the Bonnie & Delaney, and then they played with Joe Cocker, and those English guys just fell in love with all that—those Oklahoma boys.

SL: Yeah.

[03:46:20] KP: And so we, you know, got into that, and had a great time, and then came on back, and that's when we went to Memphis to start the . . .

SL: Start the tour.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Of the jobs.

KP: It's all kind of . . .

SL: So how long was your journey with Levon on—you know, after he took a break from the boys and the Dylan . . .

KP: I'm not positive. I would think it's, you know, somewhere around—I don't know whether it was a year or—it was a good,

you know, mu—I don't know. He was gone a long time.

SL: Yeah.

KP: We were gone a long time, and the time we were out in California, and then down in Memphis, and then down in Florida, and then . . .

SL: New Orleans.

KP: . . . over in New Orleans and then back. You know, it just—you know, pretty good long time. I would—I was never much of a one for keeping a journal or—you know what I'm sayin'?

SL: Wearing a watch. [*Laughs*] Right.

KP: And all kind of—but that's it was . . .

[03:47:29] SL: So I remember one of the questions that Sandra asked was if you were around when George Harrison came to visit.

KP: I was. When George Harrison—but I don't know—remember. . .

SL: Eric?

KP: . . . Eric Clapton being there.

SL: But . . .

KP: But when I went up to Washington—you know when I was telling you I came back . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . up there when the ship came in?

SL: When the stuff—uh-huh.

KP: Well, Greg's friend was a sound man like you guys. And they hired me to go help out up in Baltimore for a Cream concert.

SL: Wow.

KP: And that's where . . .

SL: That's where Clapton was.

KP: . . . I met Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker and Bru—Jack Bruce.

SL: Right.

[03:48:12] KP: Super group. Man, and that was the first time I'd ever seen amplifiers stacked as high as this ceiling. I mean, banks of 'em. It was, you know, a whole new experience for me and everybody else, I guess.

SL: Right.

KP: I hadn't ever seen nothing like that. But that was a real interesting experience doing that concert 'cause that was one of the big Cream deal. I don't know how long, but they were together a couple years maybe, I don't know [*unclear words*].

[03:48:43] SL: So did—where did Harrison show up?

KP: He came up to Woodstock to see if he could sign The Band to Apple Records. They had—the Beatles had started this Apple.

SL: Right.

KP: And they wanted to—and they, course, they loved The Band, and

they loved Bob Dylan. They weren't getting Dylan but—'cause he was already signed, but they wanted to sign up the guys to Apple Records, but it never worked out, but he was a prince of a guy and real down to earth and so forth. You can see why he was a real person.

SL: Yeah, everything I've ever heard him say or read . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . about him said . . .

KP: He was a real nice . . .

SL: . . . just a good guy.

KP: Just a good guy, and actually, Ringo Starr's the same way. He was a real good guy. You know . . .

[03:49:39] SL: So you got to see him? He came and visited, too, or . . .

KP: No, I saw him when Levon played with the . . .

SL: All Stars.

KP: . . . Ringo and the All Stars.

SL: Yeah.

KP: And they did a tour, and they came down to Dallas, to that Los Colinas resort outside of Dallas. It's one of those little towns, you know, like where the Cowboys play or something.

SL: Right.

KP: Out in there somewhere. And Paul and I went down there, and we stayed at the resort, eating all the peanuts and drinking the whiskey out of the bar in the rooms, you know.

SL: Right, right. [*Laughs*]

KP: Ran up a terrible bill. Went down there to check out, and Ringo, God bless him, has picked up our entire tab, not only us but, you know . . .

SL: Everybody that was there.

KP: Everybody that was, you know, anywhere around. That was great. Yeah. [*SL laughs*] And he was a prince, too. He was a real nice guy, and just down to earth and soulful like you would want.

[03:50:45] SL: So when you were living with Rick, and they were working on the stuff at Big Pink and doing all that stuff and they—you said they were recording in New York but—and then they went out to California to record . . .

KP: Yeah. California.

SL: . . . the rest of it.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Was there a difference in—well, first of all, from Woodstock to New York where they're actually laying down tracks, as opposed to the basement tapes, say . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . the atmosphere in the basement tapes is so pervasive.

KP: Yeah.

SL: I mean, you really feel like something is cooking here.

KP: Yeah, they got it there.

SL: And then they go to New York, record some of the album, then they go to California. Was there a big difference in the way—I mean, were you actually around when they were recording or—it's . . .

KP: Yeah. But not so much in New York that—I was there for a little bit of that, but the stuff in Los Angeles was really good. John, you know . . .

SL: John Simon took . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . over there, didn't he?

[03:51:54] KP: Yeah, and he was—they had done some great work.

I mean, you could hear it after they get all that stuff done, and it wasn't even mixed, I don't think, back then. But he was, you know, the genius. You know . . .

SL: Well, he was—he and Garth were doing the horn work.

KP: Uh-huh. Yeah.

SL: I mean, I would've given anything . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . to have been sitting, a fly on the wall . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . watching that stuff. Yeah, I th—I wanna say they were in Malibu, is that right?

KP: Uh-uh.

SL: No?

KP: Well, they did later.

SL: That's the later recording.

[03:52:24] KP: That was the studio, the Shangri-La studio that they put together later. That was on farther down the road. I was long . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . gone by then, and I think they were about to unwind themselves. I mean, poor Rick. Rick was—couldn't hold it together better. Richard was a pretty sensitive guy I think, and he'd had trouble. His girl—I don't know whether they were married or—Jane, she was a model, beautiful kid . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . from Toronto. But he was getting—he had a bad drinking problem. He drank that grandma . . .

SL: Grand Marnier, yeah.

KP: Yeah. Grand Marnier.

SL: Marnier, yeah. I've been with . . .

KP: We'd call him grandma.

SL: . . . when he used to, yeah.

KP: But he was deep into that and—but all of 'em were—you know, I don't know how they ever thought that that heroin was a good idea. But . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . Levon, you know, he had a—he got into and didn't—couldn't get loose from it for a long time, but.

[03:53:34] SL: So did you—I mean, after you took Bonnie back up there—was it Bonnie? To Woodstock, I mean, did you ever have any more times with Levon?

KP: Oh, yeah.

SL: Yeah?

KP: Sure.

SL: I guess . . .

KP: But he was, like I say, he was—you know, like I say, he had a problem by then and not really—he was always kind of reclusive a little bit.

SL: Yeah.

KP: That he wasn't—you know, that far down the road, those guys

weren't hanging out so much together. They would get—you know, Levon was hanging with this guy, a bunch of real hip artist, artistic writers and things . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . that were up there in Woodstock, and they were smart, charming people, don't get me wrong. But they were the ones that got him . . .

SL: Started.

KP: . . . led him down that little road. And you know, those people, anybody that's got a—workin' a habit like that, they're very, very—they don't wanna be around anybody that's not in on the game or . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . you know, like that.

SL: Right.

[03:55:05] KP: So I went from there back to Washington, DC, and I was living there when my buddy, John Mahan, who had—was living in Portland, Oregon, by himself—he says, "I'm going crazy. Come on—why don't you come on out here and" . . .

SL: Now was he one of your band members, or was he working for Dayton?

KP: Johnny?

SL: Yeah.

KP: Yeah. He was a guy that—I'd known him a long time. He used to date my first cousin, Julie, the girl from Eureka Springs, and that's where he and I got to be friends. And we became lifelong buddies and—long after he had quit going with my cousin. But and we were really, you know, very, very close friends. He died, but he also drank and . . .

SL: Succumbed and . . .

KP: No, he wasn't doing drugs. He was drinking.

SL: Just drinking.

[03:56:06] KP: And he just, you know—I think he had maybe—what's that when you're low blood pre—maybe anemia or some—I don't know whether—he had something that . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . required medication constantly like Oscar with that cortisol. He didn't take it and he—you know, finally got him because he was drinking all the time too. What a guy. He was a great guy, great pal.

SL: So . . .

KP: And I—he got me to come down there with him. They transferred him down to Boca Raton. And he got me to take a bunch of tests, and they hired me at this company that he

worked.

SL: To do what?

KP: I never did figure that out. [*Laughter*] No, we . . .

SL: Excuse me.

KP: . . . we were—he—that was a—what they call a—it was
Lumbermen's Underwriting s Alliance . . .

SL: Insurance?

KP: . . . or something. They wrote . . .

SL: Burial insurance?

KP: No, they wrote workers compensation . . .

SL: Oh, okay.

KP: . . . for sawmill—I mean, one of the most dangerous jobs you
can have, and their rates were sky—I mean, it was like insuring
dynamite makers or something. That was about—you know,
working in a sawmill or something like that.

SL: Right.

[03:57:35] KP: And they had an idea, and it worked for them. If we
had—it was more engineering then almost anything else. They
would come in there and engineer these things and said, "If you
will do this, this, this, this, you would have safety meetings, you
would have all of this stuff that you gotta do upfront." We'll—
you won't—you will—it'll pay off way big because your rates go

way down, you're in an alliance with others, so you get . . .

SL: You share the costs.

KP: . . . you get a share of the money that—it doesn't cost you, too, 'cause everybody puttin' up this stuff. Anyway, I was one of the—kind of the safety program to set up those and, you know, show 'em how—what we're trying to do and the . . .

SL: Sounds almost too responsible.

KP: I didn't last that long. [*SL laughs*] No, it was—it wasn't bad.

SL: It wasn't bad.

[03:57:35] KP: Ah, well, I worked with him and a gu—a friend of mine over there—you member Marty Burlsworth, the football player?

SL: Yes.

KP: His Uncle Leon was—worked for us. And Jerry Lollar, you re—you ever heard of . . .

SL: I know that name.

KP: . . . Jerry Lollar? His brother, Sherman Lollar was in . . .

SL: Baseball.

KP: . . . the baseball hall of fame, you know.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

KP: Like, that, that's his little brother. He was a [*SL laughs*] green beret train . . .

SL: Hero.

KP: . . . hero, had bullet holes in him and shit. He was out there in Laos with those Pad Phat Lao fighting the—behind the lines, you know, one of those guys. You just couldn't believe it. He'd killed people, you know, had to, and . . .

SL: Wow.

KP: . . . he was a—best—one of the best guys I ever met. And he, you know, he and I and Johnny and Leon, you know, we're—and Leon and I played music. He was a good player, and I started playing with a band there in Memphis and—I don't know, do you ever remember The Box Tops?

SL: Yeah.

[03:59:48] KP: Well, the keyboard player up there, a guy named Swain Schaefer, he was a songwriter and a fabulous keyboard player. He and I are good friends, and I got the—he was playing with a guy that—from—Ronnie Thompson, you ever remember him?

SL: I know that name.

KP: He wrote some songs for Ronnie Hawkins and . . .

SL: Yeah. Maybe I've seen his [*unclear words*].

KP: . . . and he was trying to break in—he wanted to be a performer instead of a songwriter. And so he had this band, and he would

hire—he hired guys over there from Memphis that were session people. And I started playing with them, and we played quite a bit in the studio, and then we came over and played in Hot Springs for the racing—you know, the end of the racing . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . festival. They had a big ball down there at the Arlington Hotel. We played that, and we played a bunch of gigs that—you know, in Memphis and over here and there and stuff. And so that's what I . . .

[04:00:55] SL: So you were always playing guitar and singing?

KP: I was playing harp by then and . . .

SL: Oh.

KP: . . . playing a little guitar and a little backup singing too. But I was playing a harmonica for—blues harmonica for them. And you know . . .

SL: So did you and Levon used to trade licks on harmonica?

KP: He taught me how to play the harmonica.

SL: Is that right?

KP: Yeah. And I . . .

SL: Did he ever tell you who taught him?

KP: Probably. I forget . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: But you know, he—you know, was around those blues harp players, so he was . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . and he was good. You know, he could play anything, too, like Garth, almost—a lot of those guys could—and Richard could play the piano and the drums and all this . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . and even the organ, and all those guys were—could play each other's instruments pretty much and . . .

SL: What a group.

KP: . . . and then Levon playin' the mandolin or, you know, all those things that they could do. That was so unique to me. I was watchin' him . . .

SL: It was unique to the whole business.

KP: Yeah.

SL: Nobody was doing that stuff.

[Recording stopped]

[04:02:08] SL: First of all, I gotta thank you for all this stuff that you're sharing with us. I mean, I love all the Mexico stories and all of that and your journeys with Charles Young. I always call him Charles.

KP: Yeah. I . . .

SL: I always heard that he didn't really like to be called Crazy Charlie
or . . .

KP: Probably not. I didn't . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . call him Crazy Charlie either.

SL: Right. But . . .

KP: But I just . . .

SL: And you know, he's, of course, he's a legend to me and . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . he was always good to me, and so I loved Charles. But and
you've been totally forthcoming about your time with Levon and
your friendship with him. [04:02:52] So but going back to
Sandra's interest in—and for me, I'm interested in these last two
things we hadn't talked about. And one is actually being in Big
Pink while they're working on the stuff with Bob, and they're
figuring it out, they're making it work, and they're telling stories,
and they're kind of introducing characters, and they're trading
instruments around, and they're just—they're in a lab. It's like
they're in a lab to me.

KP: Yeah.

SL: And there's a real precision to it, but there's this openness kind
of echoey stuff i—from the basement. It's a—I love these

recordings. I love how they're not, you know, overdone . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: . . . or over-processed.

[04:03:47] KP: Well, that was Garth pretty much, the engineer of all of that. I mean, he set up all that equipment and did a—he kne—he was, you know, very confident guy, electronically and all that. You can tell from his playing and all that stuff. When I first got there, I lived in Big Pink for, oh, maybe a month or two, or maybe, I don't know if it might've been longer than that.

Robbie had gotten a house in town and . . .

SL: He was married at that time.

KP: No . . .

SL: No, he n—no, no . . .

KP: . . . he wasn't. But he was . . .

SL: . . . he had his lady with him.

KP: . . . he had—yeah, he was looking to hook up with Dominique.

She was, I think, in Montreal maybe. But it was very interesting because there was so much going on with Bob, and it was two different things. They would be working on their stuff. When he was—Bob wasn't around all the time, but he would show up quite a bit, and they would work on his songs. You know, they were getting together to play with him still. I think that was

before maybe they went to Europe or something like that. And but it was af—it would be after the Forest Hills and those things where . . .

SL: He was not well received.

KP: . . . where Lee got discouraged and . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . didn't want anymore. But they still—they went back, and Levon started—you know, he was into it, and they had such good songs for them, and Bob was writin' very good songs back then, as you know. And so they were working at it. They were out there—and this basement was just, you know, you—it's—looks a lot like most studios. No—bare bones, you know, and putting rugs on the wall, I mean, gettin' the sound right and doing that stuff. But they—it was, I don't think they had—were doing that and recording it for . . .

SL: Release. It was ju . . .

KP: . . . anything other than just f—to play back and to see what they had and where they, you know, where they should be going. But it was—you know, they had—they knew what they, pretty much, were doin', even, you know, back at that point. [04:06:47] So they had pretty much the arrangements that they ne—wanted and they were just fine tuning, rehearsing,

gettin' everything like they did all those years . . .

SL: With Ronnie.

KP: . . . you know, in that—with Ronnie. That's it.

SL: They were rehearsing.

KP: And they were—they would work at it. But they were also, you know, rowdy. You know, there was some—not too much going on in Woodstock. I mean, we'd go to the—there weren't any nightclubs up there that we were going to. They had restaurants and—with bars, but not anything—we'd just . . .

SL: Everybody was pretty healthy.

KP: More so than later.

SL: Later.

[04:07:32] KP: For sure. Well, of course, Garth wasn't a . . .

SL: Right.

KP: He was not a womanizer, he wasn't a big drinker, he wasn't—you know, he was just—he was like an adult [*laughter*] in a bunch of kids. And believe me, Rick and Richard were—and Levon of course is not the most . . .

SL: Mischievous.

KP: Yeah. He is just—he would—anything, but he wasn't the most serious-minded person you ever saw either. Robbie was more serious minded. I s—I lived with him for a while when that—it

got winter time up there. I was out on the—on a sun porch, glass enclosed. It got pretty cold out there, so I moved from there. I had a bed out there, but you know, we were—there weren't that many bedrooms in Big Pink, and so I moved into Woodstock and lived in a—he had a house, and then he had a little kind of a mother-in-law . . .

SL: Quarters?

KP: . . . quarters off of that, which I lived in. And then after a while, Rick and I found this house and moved into there. So it was a real nice little place. [04:09:00] Anyway, that was—I don't recall the—the recordings were always on. I mean, they were playing, they were recording everything. So I didn't notice—it wasn't something that—I mean, it was just there, and I was listening to the music, but I don't recall—they would play through, and then they would play it again, and they would play it again, but they weren't stopping and making note—you know . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . they're not writing music down and all that. Although Garth could do that easily, and he kind of was responsible for educating the rest of the guys about the actual nuts and bolts of writing, notating . . .

SL: The structure, yeah.

KP: . . . you know, all that. But they were all experienced, good musicians by then, and they could p—you know, they—you know, you didn't need to do a lot of instruction as far I could see. You know, everybody knew where everybody else was. They'd been playing together so long they knew—they could say, "Well, let's try this or let's try that," or—and just play it again and maybe—but it was, you know, pretty much like you would think a recording session would be.

[04:10:37] SL: So I think the—what I s—what I hear, the difference between pre-Woodstock, when they just sign on with Dylan to go on tour and do his electric side of his show, and Woodstock—I get the feeling that Dylan is now listening to them. I get the feeling that they are influencing him.

KP: Well, I'm sure they were.

SL: And that they are getting a chance to work with him instead of just, like, being assigned what—"Here's this, here's a song, let's play this," and I don't think Dylan was really known for a lot of rehearsing and all that early on.

KP: No, and he wasn't structured. I mean, he played stuff that didn't really scan. I mean, it wasn't in the right number of bars . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . the right number of beats, the not—you know, run too long here, run too short there. But they had—you know, they figured that out without a whole lot of—you know, they adapted. That was what they gave to him was that they could adapt to what his kind of haphazard structure was and put it together in a way that . . .

SL: Digestible.

[04:12:00] KP: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] Yeah, which he was used to just doing on a guitar and . . .

SL: Harmonica.

KP: . . . on a harmonica. So and you've heard things like that before, people—like some of these blues players like we were listening to . . .

SL: Yeah.

KP: . . . Lightnin', he doesn't do things in f—you know, I'm gonna play sixteen bars of this and then do this and then th—he just runs it all together, too, and will change in a [*snaps*]*—he'll be right in the middle of something and—that's not quite to the end and turn it around—he just changes it right there, and they pick right up on it.*

SL: Well, when you're solo, you can do that effect . . .

KP: Yeah.

SL: You can do that.

KP: Well, and, you know . . .

SL: No one holds it against you.

KP: . . . who's gonna tell Lightnin' Hopkins what to . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . how this stuff goes? He's writin' it himself, it's him.

SL: Right, right.

[04:12:49] KP: But that's something that they—I did admire 'em for being able to take what Bob was doing and put it into a ensemble piece and something that you could record and have it, you know, be as commercial and—like it was and such a . . .

SL: Also, you can—I think you can hear them becoming friends. You know, it seems like the whole thing when he was going electric was more of a business direction decision, and there was really no time for the camaraderie that they were gaining out of the basement at Big Pink. It's like they—you could hear it—the ta—the give and take a little more, to me.

KP: Well, they did become friends. They were clo—you know, spent a lot of time together. Bob was not a very gregarious, outgoing guy. He's not one to, like Levon, sit around and joke it up or anything like that. But he is very approachable. He's a cool

guy. Nice as he could be, but not—you know, he's not a hustler or a, you know, charmer . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . like that. And but he is—I mean, he don't miss much. And of course, he had a gift like no other.

SL: Like no other.

KP: I mean, hell, he won the Pulitzer Prize, or the Nobel Prize for literature.

SL: And justifiably so.

KP: And earned it, yeah.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

KP: Yeah. He was, I mean, he's a phenom, a genuine, you know . . .

[04:14:36] SL: All right. So quickly—we have maybe ten or fifteen minutes here. Talk to me about Anna Lee and Mary Cavette.

KP: Well, they are two lovely people just as down home as you could ever imagine, and they were so close to Levon. They grew up with him, and they were like brother and sisters, truly, all of 'em. And of course, Anna is a very mother hen type. You know, she's—and she's not afraid to say or do anything. Mary is just a, you know, just 100 percent sweetheart, and she knows—they know each other so well. It was just like kids to—you know, all those years, I mean, all their lives d—and right there together all

the time . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . in school and everything. So that was very easygoing. It was kind of s—tight quarters [*SL laughs*] but they got up and went to work, Levon and I went to bed. [*Laughter*]

SL: Right.

KP: It was kind of . . .

[04:15:56] SL: So there was this—they did have to put up with you, 'cause you . . .

KP: Oh, well, it seemed like they were happy to.

SL: Well, of course they were.

KP: And I was on my best behavior, of course, who wouldn't?

SL: Yeah.

KP: You were guests . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . in their little house.

SL: Right.

KP: But they weren't—I mean, it wasn't uptight or, when are these people gonna get out of here, or . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . something like that, I didn't feel. Although, Anna, I think, later on was saying, "They came in on—stay a couple of weeks

and left in two or three months or something." [*SL laughs*] But I think they're always delighted to have . . .

SL: There's no . . .

KP: . . . Levon around and I f—I'm sure I c—I felt like I fit in, too. I wasn't, you know, trying to be—tell anybody what to do or anything. I was just happy to be there, and we were—Levon and I, were doing different things from them. We weren't, like, taking them out to nightclubbing or something.

SL: Right.

[04:16:53] KP: Levon and I would go and hear music and do things, and they were working and sleeping and, you know, living a normal life. And but we had a lot of fun and . . .

SL: Well, I think . . .

KP: . . . laughed and joked around . . .

SL: . . . of the . . .

KP: . . . because they were so easy with each other and . . .

SL: . . . of the places that y'all could've gone to establish a home base and figure out what you were going to do from there, you probably couldn't—Levon couldn't have picked a stronger set of friends of support.

KP: Oh, that's true.

SL: I mean, they understood that he had left the boys. You guys

were out . . .

KP: I don't know that he even told them. I mean, they didn't ask any hard questions.

SL: Right.

KP: And believe me, you gotta understand, we—this was nothing but free form, we didn't have plan . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . that we're gonna figure out what to do . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . that we're gonna get together and put—make a life, you know, we're gonna . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . head down this road. We were just living it and happy to—you know, it was—like I say, that's what I loved about him, and I think he liked about me, too, that we weren't structured, and we weren't—didn't have a plan that we were gonna make come true. [04:18:13] We were just—you know, he was just getting some relief from all the time that he had—all those years, really, he had been scheduled by Ronnie or others or the demands of playing gig music or contracts. You know . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . they had contracts to play a lot of times. And now he didn't,

and I think he really appreciated that part of it, and he didn't want to say, "Well, we gotta get organized here."

SL: No.

KP: He—that was the opposite of what he . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . he was up to. And me, too. I wasn't worried about—you know, yeah, we'll do whatever comes up and, you know, s . . .

[04:18:55] SL: Well, don't you think the girls felt that way too, Anna and Mary?

KP: I hope so . . .

SL: I think they did.

KP: . . . 'cause there's—they were . . .

SL: They didn't have to hear anything. I think . . .

KP: No, they . . .

SL: . . . I think they understood.

KP: Yeah. They knew Levon so well . . .

SL: Right.

KP: . . . that they knew he wasn't gonna, you know, he wasn't gonna pour . . .

SL: I bet he could m . . .

KP: . . . his soul out to them or anything—anybody else. He was just—you know, we—and I think they realized we were just

living and looking around and . . .

SL: And I bet they had . . .

KP: . . . checking the life out, checking the world out.

SL: I bet they—I bet he kept them laughing too.

KP: Oh, j—they wouldn't [*SL laughs*] trade that for anything. He took their lives, which were fairly, like you say, structured, mundane, no highs and lows. They were just—you know, they loved it 'cause it was so free form and unstructured and funny. It was always funny.

[04:19:52] SL: Okay, man. We're gonna stop. Let's stop, and listen, we'll have to get back together to finish this up. I mean, we've got you from Mexico to DC, and we've got you back home, and then you went back—I mean, we've got to start somewhere around that time and . . .

KP: Go to the parks . . .

SL: Go to the parks and . . .

KP: . . . and all and . . .

SL: . . . yeah.

[End of interview 04:20:36]