

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

University of Arkansas  
1 East Center Street  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
(479) 575-6829

**Arkansas Memories Project**

Barbara Lunsford Pryor  
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford  
September 23, 2013  
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 website at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

## Transcript Methodology

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

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 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**

See the Citation Guide at <http://pryorcenter.uark.edu/about.php>.

**Scott Lunsford interviewed Barbara Lunsford Pryor on September 23, 2013, in Fayetteville Arkansas.**

[00:00:00]

Barbara Pryor: Oh . . .

Scott Lunsford: Barbara Lunsford Pryor [*BP laughs*], we're at your residence, your and DP's residence, here in Fayetteville, Arkansas. And the day's date is September 25. I can't believe it's that late already.

BP: I keep thinkin' it's Thursday or Friday, but it's only Wednesday, I think.

SL: And the year is 2013.

BP: It is. [*Laughs*]

SL: And we're here with the Pryor Center. We're doin' a—a Pryor Center interview. You're our newest victim. [*Laughter*]

BP: Yes.

SL: And—uh—we're gonna—uh—we're gonna go through your life as long as you can stand it. [*BP laughs*] And—uh—I'll encourage you to—um—uh—take your time. If you need to take a break or anything, you just let me know. There's no rules here. We can stop anytime. Uh—we can—we'll eat. We'll cater in some lunch or go get . . .

Joy Endicott: Let's pause for a second.

SL: . . . some lunch here in a little while, probably in another hour or so.

Trey Marley: Scott, we need to pause for a second.

SL: Okay.

TM: I'm pausin' . . .

[Tape stopped]

[00:00:59] SL: This is great that we're finally gettin' to do this.

BP: Isn't it something?

SL: And I—I'm not sure I'm exactly the one to be doing it with you guys,  
but . . .

BP: Oh, yes.

SL: . . . but—uh—um—it's a great honor.

BP: Oh.

SL: In many ways.

BP: Thank you. Thank you.

SL: Um . . .

BP: It's our honor, really.

SL: Well, we'll see [*laughter*] how we come out of this. But—um—uh—you know, we'll—we'll preserve this forever. Uh—Pryor Center will put it in the archives and keep it alive. We'll do whatever we have to do to keep it that way. Uh—there will be a—a disc that goes to Special Collections as well. Um—we'll encourage documentarians, students, professors, researchers, everybody in the world that has an interest in Arkansas history—uh—to use this stuff.

[00:01:48] BP: Oh, that's great. That's fabulous.

SL: I think it is great.

BP: Yes.

SL: And—uh—you guys are to be—uh—commended for . . .

BP: Well . . .

SL: . . . gettin' this ball goin'.

BP: . . . we're—we're glad to do it, and we wish that we had a huge—uh—bunch of people to do it and a huge budget because there's so many great stories, as you know. And—uh—we wish that we could capture all of 'em but . . .

[00:02:16] SL: I tell ya, I've been rereading—um—um—*A Pryor Commitment*.

BP: Yes.

SL: And it's just a fabulous book.

BP: Oh, thank you. I . . .

SL: And it . . .

BP: I think it is. When he was writing it, I—he kept saying, "I don't know about this." And I said, "Make it a love story. Make it a love story."

[*Laughs*]

SL: It is a love story.

BP: So I think it is a love story.

SL: It is a great love story and . . .

BP: Yes.

[00:02:36] SL: And you can almost taste the scenes—uh—that he depicts in there. He paints lovely pictures with words.

BP: He does. I think he's a good writer, and—um—um—I think it was a—wonderful experience to write it. And—and most of it was written in the Fayetteville library in one of those rooms that you can use, so . . .

SL: I know.

BP: . . . so that's special. Special . . .

SL: Well, and . . .

BP: . . . to me.

SL: . . . what struck me was that, you know, we've been traveling all over the state interviewing folks, and the same sort of flavor that is in that book is also coursing through all the interviews that we've done.

BP: Oh, great.

SL: It's—there's a personal love story, really, about people's lives and— and what they have done and what they went through and their experiences and how they saw things. It's just a—that book really just affirmed what the Pryor Center is doing.

[00:03:33] BP: Well, and you know, he's—he's such a special person. I remember when we met—um—at the university, he was—um—a senior and I was a freshman, and I hadn't had too many dates 'cause, as you remember [*SL laughs*] or maybe not, my parents were strict. All the Fayetteville—uh—girls were not allowed to date anyone from the university or that was older. They had to know their parents. But anyway, he was one of my first dates, I guess, in—at the university. And he was so different. He was so different. And from the beginning I sensed that his mission was to change the world and make it better. And it's so wonderful to be caught up in a dream . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: . . . of somebody that wants to only do the good things. [*Laughs*] So it was fun. It was a very different courtship. We did not go to the

movies or out to dinner. We would drive out in the country . . .

SL: I know.

BP: . . . to War Eagle and walk the fields and the river and visit with all the folks along [*laughs*] the way. It was just so different. And you know, he would go to the sale barn. [*SL laughs*] He would do all these things that most college boys—uh—weren't even interested in at that point. So he was very—uh—outstanding. From the very beginning, you sensed that he had this—um—wonderful commitment.

[00:05:10] SL: Well—and . . .

BP: So . . .

SL: . . . he has, and you do.

BP: He has.

SL: And you both have . . .

BP: Well, I caught the dr . . .

SL: . . . joined that together.

BP: I caught the dream . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . from him . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . you know. Because I wanted to be a writer, a poet, a much quieter [*laughs*] kind of person. Uh—but I got caught up in the dream.

[00:05:28] SL: Well, we'll—we'll get back to the courtship and—and the marriage and—and all the things kind of molded—uh—your all's lives. But usually, we start with when and where you were born.

BP: Well, I was born in Westville, Oklahoma. Um—my father worked for Dyke Lumber, which was—um—an Arkansas company, but they had a—a store in—uh—Westville, Oklahoma. And—uh—my dad was—uh—totally self educated. One of my earliest memories is seeing him at the kitchen table after—my room was right off the kitchen—seeing the light shining on his hair. And he was reading all the books on carpentry and contracting, and you know, he—he taught himself everything that—that he knew. And eventually, after—uh—working for the Dyke brothers for many years, he—uh—had his own contracting company, and then he went to work for Tune Construction in Fayetteville and built some of the buildings that are on the campus. So all of those things are—are important to us. [00:06:46] Uh—but anyway, in Westville, Oklahoma, my father—um—used to take us, when we were very little—uh—fishing in the beautiful Illinois River. And we would camp out, and one of the earliest memories is Mother makin' coffee in a skillet, and even though we were, you know, three or four [*laughs*] years old, that coffee was probably the best thing I'd ever tasted. [*Laughter*] And I used to wade behind my dad in the—in that cold water.

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: And that's a memory. Uh—the other memory [*laughs*] was we lived in a two-story house, and—uh—I wanted to go out on the roof with my rocking chair.

SL: [*Laughs*] Oh, gosh!

BP: I was, like, three or four, so I drug my rocking [*laughs*] chair out there. Mother came home, and there I was up on the roof rocking closer and closer to the edge. [*Laughs*] So I got into so much trouble. I do remember that. [*Laughs*]

SL: So you were all of three or four years old.

BP: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

[00:07:49] SL: So you did—you—uh—neglected to tell us what year and day you were born.

BP: Okay, I was born at home in Westville and—um—um—in 1938. May 5, 1938. And—um—at that time people were born at home. My brother was born in Cass at home in an old log house. And so we—you know, that's the way it was. That house, actually, that I was born in is still there. Uh—Dad and I drove over and looked at it before he went away—passed away, and there it was, you know. [*Laughs*]

[00:08:29] SL: Was it—did it look smaller than you remember?

BP: I didn't really remember it.

SL: You didn't?

BP: But it looked good. Someone . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . had taken good . . .

SL: Care of it.

BP: . . . care of it. It was . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

BP: . . . painted. It had a beautiful glass, oval door, and you know, it was

very, very nice. And we probably, even though I wasn't aware of it, we probably didn't have very much money. But—uh—the neighborhood was nice, and you know. [00:08:56] Then, of course, we moved to Fayetteville and—I mean—excuse me—uh . . .

SL: To Bentonville.

BP: . . . Bentonville.

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: We lived in Bentonville for—till I was nine, so what was that? Four—four years. And Bentonville was a wonderful place—uh—fabulous. We lived right off the square behind the Methodist church, which we were members of. And—uh—we—uh—had a wonderful time in Bentonville. It was very small and friendly, and you knew everybody, and everybody knew you. You walked to the square. There was no problem, you know, when [*laughs*] you were six years old or whatever. Um—so then we moved to Fayetteville when I was nine.

[00:09:47] SL: Let's talk about—uh—Mom and Dad for just a little bit. Uh—what was—uh—your father's name?

BP: His name was Bruce. Walter Bruce Lunsford. And he was born in Des Arc during the Depression, so he was a—a person that went to a CCC camp in Cass, Arkansas . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: . . . where he met my mother. And she—um—was an orphan child. Her parents died young, and she was raised by her grandmother in Cass, Arkansas.

SL: And what was her name?

BP: Rosa Lee.

SL: Rosa Lee . . .

BP: Brickey.

SL: . . . Brickey.

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: Yeah.

[00:10:32] SL: And—um—we don't—do we know where Rosa Lee Brickey was born?

BP: We do not. She tried to find out forever, and—uh—her grandmother never would discuss her—um—daughter or her son-in-law's lives. I think they got married against her wishes, as did my mother. My mother and dad ran away and got married. They eloped. [*SL laughs*] So—runs in the family, I guess. But anyway—uh—sometimes she thought it was Missouri but—because her father was from Missouri.

[00:11:18] SL: And—her—the grandmother's name—uh . . .

BP: Her name wa . . .

SL: . . . was Anderson.

BP: Rosa Lee Turner.

SL: Turner.

BP: It was Rosa Lee Anderson Turner.

SL: Uh-huh.

BP: She was married twice.

SL: Uh-huh.

BP: And—um—O'Conley—her—her name was Rosa Lee Turner Anderson Conley.

SL: Conley.

[00:11:42] BP: Sorry. Yeah, she—she was a Turner from Turner Bend and—uh—large family there. So she was a remarkable person. And her first husband was a—um—doctor—med student at—in Little Rock, and he caught—uh—smallpox or—uh—and died—um—and had to come home. And she went to the train station in Ozark to pick up his coffin. And she had a—a wagon and a team of mules, and when she was coming back over—uh—the mountains, the Boston Mountains, the mules were spooked and ran away. And she fell out of the wagon, and it tumbled down into a ravine.

SL: Wow.

BP: And she broke her back. She broke her legs. She—uh—she was very injured. And so for a year she would lie in her bed and read his medical books. That was—she was a great reader, and I remember all the books in her house. [00:12:57] But as a consequence, she was a person that could be a midwife or she could treat people. Uh—a lot of the mountain people would come to her for different remedies. And she would go out in the woods and find all these herbs that she would mix up, and she was very interesting. And anything she touched grew. It was—she had a remarkable flower garden—vegetable garden. Everything she did was pretty special, and I think that's where Mother

got her green thumb and her—uh—gift for making things grow.

[00:13:40] SL: Now—um—so when we're talkin' about Mother's—let's see—Mother's mother.

BP: Yes.

SL: Now—and her father . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . died early.

BP: Yes.

SL: Now, what were the circumstances? How did that . . .

BP: I think that—um—uh—Mother's mother died from that influenza thing that swept the country. She died very young. She was . . .

SL: In the [19]20s.

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: Nineteen twenties?

BP: Yeah. Eight—1918—in that . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: . . . era. And—uh—so—uh—her father brought her brother, Allan Brickey, and my mother—uh—to—home to Grandmother to raise. And—um—she said—Grandma often said that she would—looked out across this huge field that was in front of her house. She lived on the other side of the Mulberry River. You had to ford the river to get to her house. And she saw this man walking with—leading one child and carrying the other, and that was my mother and Uncle Allan. So . . .

[00:14:56] SL: And then her father just left at . . .

BP: He was so brokenhearted. Um—my grandmother always thought he died of a broken heart. Uh—I think technically he was killed in a mining accident.

SL: Hmm.

BP: And forever, I thought Grandmother was saying, "gold mine." But now I think she was saying "coal mine" . . .

SL: Coal mine.

BP: . . . because there were so many coal mines . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: . . . around Charleston and, you know, throughout those hills. I'm not sure how he died, but she never would speak of him or his family. And for years we didn't think there were any family, but later—lately, we've discovered that they lived in Kansas City, Missouri, and his father—uh—and mother lived to an old age. So there was . . .

SL: Some other . . .

BP: . . . an opportunity to know them, but she never would've—I think she was afraid that they would take 'em away.

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: Take the children away from her. And so she would not have anything to do with them.

[00:16:04] SL: So you think that—um—her father was working near Charleston, Arkansas?

BP: Maybe, yeah. Around in that area, maybe. But my mother only remembers seeing him one time. He brought her a doll. And she

could've been four or five, and then I think he passed away.

SL: Hmm.

BP: She always said that her mother and father named her **Louise**, but when Grandmother [*laughs*] took 'em over, she changed her name to Rosa Lee, after herself. [*Laughter*] And I do think that's a beautiful name.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Rosa Lee.

SL: It is.

BP: I've never known . . .

SL: It is.

BP: . . . another Rosa Lee, so it's kind of special.

[00:16:53] SL: Okay, so—um—what about—um—her—um—her brother—  
um . . .

BP: Allan?

SL: Allan.

BP: Well, he became a Baptist minister.

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: He was a wonderful man. Fabulous. And we used to go to his church, actually, here in Fayetteville, the First Baptist Church. He would preach there. I'm not sure it was his church. I know he had churches throughout—like, in Charleston and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: . . . around—uh—in that area. Um—but he also was a chaplain in the

air f—army.

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: And he fought in the—or he was in the Pacific and . . .

SL: For World War II?

BP: Yeah. And he saw—uh—Sai—he was on Saipan and some of those terrible islands where . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: . . . such horrible things happened. He would never talk about it because I think it was just so horrendous that he chose not to dwell on it. And so many of the veterans of that age don't talk about it 'cause I think it was just too horrible for them. And it was a close-up war. And I think he saw a lot of terrible things. Uh—then, let's see, Uncle Allan—when did he come back? Um—he didn't live in Fayetteville. His wife was from Springdale, but I don't think they ever lived here. It's funny I don't remember. She—she was very close to Allan, but they did not see each other very much. And my dad also basically was an orphan child. We did not know his family too much. He had a sister, but maybe once every two or [*laughs*] three years.

[00:18:39] SL: Do—do you member—um—um—our father's—uh—parents' names?

BP: Well, of course, Dad—it was Walter Bruce Lunsford Jr.

SL: Junior.

BP: So that was his father's name . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: . . . and his mother's name was Emily. They taught—they were both schoolteachers. They taught Latin, math, all of this really wonderful stuff in the delta.

SL: Mh-hmm.

BP: They taught Des Arc, Trumann, you know, around in there. They were both schoolteachers and—but she died probably when Dad was in his teens and—uh—Granddad lived—uh—longer than that, but we never really saw them. You know, he just wasn't very close to his family, and why, I have no idea. So they didn't talk, you know, people didn't talk about things then. You'd—you didn't hear why people didn't see each other. Maybe everybody just worked hard and lived their lives and didn't travel like we do nowadays, but we—we both—all of us grew up thinking that we didn't have any kin. You know, we didn't ?listen?. David's family is huge. He's got, you know, cousins and . . .

SL: Right.

BP: . . . aunts and uncles. But we did not know our people. We did not know the Lunsford side or, actually, the Brickey side.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:19] SL: I wonder what—uh—uh—Dad's mom's maiden name was.

Do you . . .

BP: Hmm.

SL: Unfair question?

BP: Bentley?

SL: Bentley. I think that's correct.

BP: He was born in Tennessee.

SL: Ripley, Tennessee.

BP: Mh-hmm.

[00:20:35] SL: Well, let's talk about how . . .

BP: I think her name may have been Lucy. Wow, I should know that, but  
I . . .

SL: And his sister was Emily.

BP: No.

SL: No?

BP: His sister was Jean.

SL: Jean.

BP: I'm named after her.

SL: Okay.

BP: Yeah.

[00:20:47] SL: Well, we'll figure that out.

BP: [*Whispers*] I know.

SL: We can figure that out. [*BP laughs*] So let's talk about how Bruce  
Lunsford and Rosa Lee Brickey got together. How did . . .

BP: Oh, okay.

SL: . . . how did that happen?

BP: My understanding is that there was a Halloween party in Cass,  
Arkansas, and all the CCC boys and the various young ladies that lived  
in that district had a Halloween. There was a Halloween party. That's  
where they met. And then I guess the following year, they ran away

and got married.

[00:21:25] SL: Well, was [*BP laughs*] that a church-sponsored party?

BP: You know, I don't know.

SL: You don't know?

BP: Hm-mm.

SL: I kind of remember there's s . . .

BP: Maybe.

SL: It may be a myth, but I understood that there was a pie sale involved, too.

BP: Don't remember.

SL: And a dance. They were dancing . . .

BP: Probably. So it probably wouldn't be a church . . .

SL: Church thing if they were dancing.

BP: No, 'cause they both loved to dance. They were wild dancers.

[*Laughter*]

SL: We come by that honest.

BP: They had a good time.

SL: Yeah.

BP: They always had a good time. Yeah.

SL: So—but it was at Cass that they . . .

BP: It was at Cass. I'm pretty sure it was at Cass. I don't know where.

[00:22:08] SL: Now, back then Highway 23 was really just a dirt road, wasn't it?

BP: It was. Mh-hmm.

SL: I mean—and that als . . .

BP: We used to go down . . .

SL: That also kind of explains how people didn't travel . . .

BP: Go . . .

SL: . . . great distances to . . .

BP: Yes, I remember when we lived in, I guess, Westville and Bentonville. My mother would just put us on the bus, my brother, Porter, and me, and tell the bus driver [*laughs*] to drop us off at Turner Bend, and we would be dropped off at Turner Bend. We would spend the night with Champ Turner . . .

SL: And Flo.

BP: . . . who owned the store. Champ and Flo. Then my—we called him Uncle Jake because my grandmother didn't believe that he was our real grandfather. That was her second marriage. So anyway, he would come with a team and mules and take us to the farm.

[00:23:12] SL: So this is . . .

BP: We would ford the creek. I mean, it was very exciting. [*Laughs*]

SL: Jake's last name was . . .

BP: Conley.

SL: Conley.

BP: Mh-hmm. Yes.

SL: And so he would come pick you up in a wagon?

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: Is that right?

BP: With mules. Mh-hmm.

SL: With mules.

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: And you'd go up the river and cross or it . . .

[00:23:33] BP: We would go down the road, and then at certain point we'd cross the river. And I grew up swimming in the Mulberry. And Grandmother would just let us go down to the creek and swim, if you can imagine, without any supervision. [*Laughs*]

SL: No lifeguards. [*Laughter*]

BP: People didn't do that then. We played in the woods all the time.

SL: So this was you and brother Porter.

BP: My brother, Porter, and I were sent often to—I mean, in the summertime to Grandmother's. I don't remember Gary going without my mother 'cause he would've been—he's five years younger than I am, so . . .

SL: And Porter was three years—two ye . . .

BP: No, no, he was a year and a half.

SL: Year and a half older than you—very close . . .

BP: We were very close in age. Mh-hmm.

SL: And he was born . . .

[00:24:19] BP: He was born in Cass.

SL: . . . in Cass.

BP: He was. Mh-hmm.

SL: I even wonder if where he was born had electricity or had . . .

BP: I don't think so. It's—if you—I know where he was born at—the log house is still there. It's a little log cabin that hangs out over a creek. And the doctor was Dr. Porter, and that's where his name came from. They name . . .

SL: Middle name Allan . . .

BP: After the brother.

SL: . . . after Mom's brother.

BP: Uh-huh. And that's where he was born, in that log cabin. I would be very surprised if they—I think they had a wood stove, probably an outhouse, and I assume they had some—a well—running water. So . . .

SL: A well.

BP: A well. That's right.

SL: So . . .

BP: And that's the best water, by the way, around Cass and Turner Bend. My—I remember my grandmother's water—pulling that bucket and the coolest, sweetest water came out of that well.

[00:25:34] SL: Even—you probably don't remember in Westville if you had a refrigerator or an icebox. Probably an icebox.

BP: I think so. Yeah, I think so.

SL: And . . .

BP: Probably.

SL: . . . was there indoor plumbing in Westville?

BP: Yes, I think there was. Mh-hmm. Yeah.

SL: But in Cass . . .

BP: There would not have been.

SL: . . . that was not the case.

BP: Of course, I never lived in Cass.

SL: But you visited.

BP: Oh yeah, sure. No, my grandmother did not have—she had an outhouse. [*Laughs*]

[00:25:59] SL: And did she have electricity? Maybe not at first?

BP: You know, not at first because I remember her reading by coal . . .

SL: Coal oil?

BP: Coal lantern. Our bed—beds were in the main room. There were two big old iron beds. That's where we slept. And there was a big fireplace, and by the light of coal-oil lanterns, she would sit up and read. We were long asleep and—but when my mother would come, they would sit up by the fire and tell stories and talk and laugh and cry. [*Laughs*] And we would sleepily be listening to all of that. You know, she lived—my great-grandmother lived during the Civil War. And she remembers Frank and Jesse James and the Yankees that rode through and took the chickens and burned the barn and ran off with the hogs. And she was a very anti-North person. She really did not like [*laughs*] the Yankees. And you know, they killed people in that valley and . . .

[00:27:15] SL: So it—is there a Frank and Jesse James story somehow . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . in there?

BP: When she was nine years old, my great-grandmother, she said Frank and Jesse rode through that road on the way to Missouri because that would be their home base. But they used the Pig Trail, you know, to go back and forth. And at that time her house used to be right there on the Pig Trail, not too far from Turner Bend. It's been torn down since. And for years it had a cedar tree that my mother had planted right beside it. But anyway, she was a—they came through, Frank and Jesse James, and they asked to stay in the barn and keep their horses. And when they left the next morning, they gave my—her father a gold piece, which was probably the only gold piece he'd ever seen. But it was quite a legendary story for many, many years. That was it.

[00:28:26] SL: Well, those guys had fans. I mean, they . . .

BP: Oh, they loved . . .

SL: . . . were popular.

BP: They love 'em, yeah, because they, you know, did things against the Yankees. Now, Mother—Grandmother always said that when she was little—I'm not sure how old—that she was not feeling one day, and she did not go to church with the rest of her family. And they lived in a log house. It had a dirt floor, and they kept the meat inside, you know, to keep the animals away from it. And that while she was at home alone, that—she called it a panther. A big cat, I guess, came and was digging under the door. Did I ever tell you this story?

SL: No.

BP: Oh, okay. Well, digging under the door and when the paws got far enough in, she took the ax . . .

SL: Oh!

BP: . . . and cut the paws off. Yes.

SL: Now, this . . .

BP: She was a tough cookie, you know.

[00:29:324] SL: Now, was this Grandmother or Great-grandmother?

BP: Great-grandmother.

SL: Great-grandmother.

BP: See, Grandmother, we never knew.

SL: Yeah, yeah. Well, that's a—that's exciting.

BP: That's a good story. [*Laughs*]

SL: I mean there's a—well, there [*BP laughs*] has always been speculation that there were panthers at some point . . .

BP: Yes, and I have . . .

SL: . . . down there.

BP: . . . a painting that was taken from an Arkansas historic book, and it's got bear and panther and deer. All are displayed by the hunters. So yeah, I think there may have been. But—so what—the other day when I was walkin' down to my mailbox, I saw a bobcat crossing my driveway. Yeah.

SL: In Little Rock.

BP: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

SL: That's what you need. Need some bobcats down there. [*Laughter*]

BP: So anyway, you never know. [*Laughter*] There's wildness everywhere.

[00:30:31] SL: Okay, so I'm trying to get as many stories down there in Cass when you were growing up as a child. You weren't living there, but you have fond memories of being sent down there by bus . . .

BP: We loved . . .

SL: . . . and goin' down there with Mom.

BP: We loved that place. We did.

SL: The table I remember was a table that had benches . . .

BP: It did. You're right.

SL: . . . on it.

BP: It did. And my grandmother cooked huge, huge—we called 'em lunch, she calls 'em—would call 'em dinner. And when the hired men were there to help harvest—she grew tobacco, her own tobacco. She smoked it. She had a corncob pipe. But she also grew other things, and these hired men would come in to harvest, and Grandmother would cook ham, fried chicken, pork chops, any kind of vegetable you've ever heard of. Corn bread—you know, apple dumplings. I mean, it went on and on. That table literally groaned with food. And everybody would sit down and just eat heartily, and then at night you might have something like buttermilk with corn bread in it. I mean—you know, that was the main meal. It was huge, and she was a fabulous [*laughs*], fabulous cook. So she was, you know, quite

something. [00:32:13] And Mother, you know, was a great cook and loved feeding all these people. She always fed about five times more than [*laughs*] she should have. But anyway [*laughs*]*—*that's right, it was a bench. It was a trestle table with two benches.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Exactly.

[00:32:35] SL: So do you remember any conversations that you had with Great-grandmother?

BP: The thing that she often told me was "pretty is as pretty does." That was her [*laughs*] little advice, which was good. And I also remember she used to save me—she had a bottle tree, which made a deep impression on me. But she saved me small pieces of glass and china that were broken. She had a grape arbor, and the dirt there was so soft and warm, and I would play there for hours, and I would take all of those pieces of glass and make a house. You know, draw it out, put the furniture in with all the glass or the china and little twigs. You know, it was just wonderful. We—of course, there was no television or any of that, so you just—and the other thing I remember from there is her flowers, which must have been zinnias or dahlias, were as tall as I was. You know, you looked 'em in the face. [*Laughter*] Course, she had a lot of manure [*laughs*] and things like that.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

[00:33:53] BP: Yeah.

SL: I k . . .

BP: And I remember we killed hogs in the—or they did. That was a terrible . . .

SL: You saw that happen?

BP: Oh yeah. Mh-hmm.

SL: Then . . .

BP: They would slaughter the hogs, and she would make soap, you know, from the fat and it—they saved every piece of those hogs. They had pickled feet and—I mean, every—and they would eat on it all winter, you know. It was big. So . . .

[00:34:25] SL: Did they smoke 'em?

BP: I think they did. They had a smokehouse. Yeah, they did.

SL: And I b—did she have a place to do—store her canning in some kind of cellar or . . .

BP: Yes, she did. She had a root cellar. And she also, in the winter, kept ice in there that she had taken out of the river. Mh-hmm. Yes.

SL: That's such pioneer stock.

BP: I know, I know. And see, as far as I know, she never set foot out of that valley. She never rode a train. She certainly never rode in an airplane. I'm not even sure—I don't even think they had a car, see. Maybe, you know . . .

SL: Well, now . . .

BP: . . . later, when their—her children were—came back, but . . .

[00:35:12] SL: And she ended up living with us at some point in time. She came to Fayetteville, didn't she?

BP: No.

SL: Well, who was that?

BP: She lived with—I don't know.

SL: Someone stayed—I think it was Grandma.

BP: Was it Grandmother? She lived to be a hundred, you know.

SL: I think she stayed in that north . . .

BP: I think she . . .

SL: . . . bedroom.

BP: . . . wound up with Herman Jr. or one of the—I don't remember that.

SL: I'm not sure if she came up here to see a doctor . . .

BP: Oh.

SL: . . . every once in a while and . . .

[00:35:40] BP: See—you know, I left home at nineteen . . .

SL: That's right.

BP: . . . so you may have a whole different set of memories. And I—then when I left home, I was gone.

SL: You were.

BP: Yeah. Just rarely got to come back.

[00:35:58] SL: Well, what about—let's talk a little bit about Dad. [*BP laughs*] You know, what was he—what was his job description at the CCC camp?

BP: Well, of course, you know, they built picnic areas out of rock, and they surveyed. They surveyed all of that country in the Boston Mountains, and some of it he was sure had never felt the weight of a human foot.

It was virgin land, virgin timber, and he learned all about surveying, and he knew every tree, every kind of tree, every kind of wood, the leaves, and he taught us that, growing up. I don't know if he taught you that, but every time we went into the woods, we had to identify what trees [*SL laughs*] we were walking under. Yeah, you know, that was great.

SL: It was great.

BP: I still can do it . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . you know. And he, as I said, studied at night and got a paying job [*laughs*] later. But they're—they were children of the Depression, so they were frugal. They saved everything. They used everything. And Dad had a mathematical mind, and I think you got it. I didn't. [*Laughter*] And he was a, you know, very gregarious, funny, loud guy. He loved practical jokes, and he was just really—had a good time. And I think—in my opinion, he must've been pretty popular. I know he was on the city council for ten years and . . .

SL: In Fayetteville.

BP: Uh-huh. Mh-hmm.

[00:37:47] SL: I'm kind of interested of course, in your fishing experience . . .

BP: Well . . .

SL: . . . early on and . . .

BP: . . . he was the fisherman. He was one of the best fishermen ever.

Yeah.

SL: You would actually [*BP laughs*], even as early as four or . . .

BP: Oh, yeah.

SL: . . . five years . . .

BP: I would . . .

SL: . . . old, you were wading . . .

BP: I would wade with him and it—my—the water would be up to—you know. [*SL laughs*] No, really. And I'd be right behind him. Yes.  
Yeah.

[00:38:15] SL: And he was fly-fishing.

BP: Fly-fishing.

SL: Which is kind of unusual.

BP: Yes. Yes, he did well.

SL: Now, I like to believe that he was fishing to put protein on the table.

BP: Well, we certainly ate everything he caught. My mother, you know, cooked everything that he brought home. Absolutely.

SL: Did you—did he ever teach you to clean a fish?

BP: My mother told me never to learn how to clean a fish. [*SL laughs*]  
She said, "Never learn how to clean a fish. Never mow the lawn. And have all of your children before you're thirty." [*Laughter*] So I followed her advice to the letter. [*Laughter*]

SL: Here we are. [*Laughter*] That's funny.

BP: Yes.

[00:39:01] SL: That's funny. [*BP laughs*] So you really don't have a

whole lot of memories of Westville.

BP: No. I remember, of course, how a lumberyard smells. There's nothing better. All of that wood. You know, it just smells so wonderful. And of course, we had the biggest sandpile to play in in the lumber yard 'cause they sold [*laughs*] it.

SL: Sand.

BP: And we used to spend hours, I think, in that—in the sand pile.

SL: Now, this is you and Porter.

BP: Yeah. Mh-hmm. Yeah.

[00:39:33] SL: Well, maybe we should talk a little bit about Porter as a child, when you were brother and sister . . .

BP: Well . . .

SL: . . . growing up.

BP: . . . Porter had a photographic memory. Whatever he read, he could read it right back to you. He was probably the best bridge player I've ever been around. He loved music, and he knew music. If he played a record for you, it was the best experience [*laughs*] you would have for days. He would tell you all about it and what this meant and what that meant. Growing up, we were always close, you know, 'cause we were so close in age.

SL: Right.

[00:40:11] BP: And he was really smart. Smart person, but had his own—he, you know, walked to a different [*laughs*] drummer. He didn't necessarily want to go to school. He was just as happy digging

ditches or being a bouncer at a nightclub. [*SL laughs*] You know, he just—as smart as he was . . .

SL: Right.

BP: . . . he—school was not one of his—and he was a good student. He made A's. But he just—he was—had a free spirit. I think he was a hippie before there were hippies.

SL: Beatnik.

BP: Yeah, he was a beatnik. [*BP laughs*]

SL: So his middle name was Allan . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . right? Porter Allan Lunsford. So do you think that by the time you got to Bentonville, he was probably entering the public schools a little ahead of you or . . .

BP: Yes, he would be—I think he was two years ahead of me. They didn't have kindergarten or nursery or any of that then. You just went to the first grade. And I imagine he was in the third grade. But then the Bentonville school system—it's a beautiful school. It's like a Spanish . . .

SL: Architecture.

BP: Mh-hmm. Beautiful, and it was walkable. And we also, at that time, because it was World War II, we had victory—a big victory garden next to the school, which all the townspeople and the children—everybody worked in the victory garden and, you know . . .

[00:41:52] SL: What was the idea behind victory gardens?

BP: Well, you grew your own vegetables. You know, there was a food shortage, which—I'm not so sure it was a food shortage as much as it was a gas—you know, a shortage . . .

SL: Transporting all the . . .

BP: So transporting—and so everybody—plus, we came from an agricultural society—Arkansas is. And I think people—Mother and Dad had a garden on Assembly Drive, as you remember. I think it was—this was a common victory garden, though, that the whole town . . .

SL: Community.

BP: . . . mh-hmm—worked in. And I'm good friends with P. Allen Smith, and he thinks that if each town in Arkansas took a plot of land and had a garden that they could feed their town. You know, they could grow enough beans, tomatoes, lettuce, all the vegetables that they could eat. And I'm sure that's what we were doing. And it was a great impression on me to see all of these people working in the garden, the mayor, the preacher, you know, whoever. And it must've been around the time when Sam Walton was getting ready to come to Bentonville, but I don't remember him. I remember the dime store, but I'm not sure if it was Walton's. Maybe it was. But there was a very large spirit during World War II about our soldiers—doing patriotic things for your country—people that lost a boy—it was the whole tragedy of the town. You know, that's the kind of thing that I remember more about Bentonville was working together to make things better.

[00:44:05] SL: So Bruce Lunsford was—he was too old to join the army

or . . .

BP: He wanted—he had three children, and some were exempt. He wanted to join the Seabees. Do you know what they are? They're the people that go in and build the camps and housing, and you know, they're a part of the war effort, but they don't . . .

SL: They're not . . .

BP: . . . do battle.

SL: Right.

[00:44:33] BP: But they prepare the way, and I think Mother just had a major fit [*SL laughs*] 'cause she had three little children under—you know, that—and so he was exempt. And I always think he regretted that, you know. Probably. But I don't regret it.

SL: No.

BP: You know.

[00:44:57] SL: Yeah. So let's talk a little bit about Bentonville. Tell me about the house in Bentonville.

BP: The Bentonville house was right behind the church, and it was an old house. It was a wonderful old house. It had an attic, and that's where we played a lot of the time. We had a playhouse up there Mother had made for us. Wood floors, big windows. You know, it was a—I guess, turn-of-the-century house. It wasn't a new house. Then Dad later built a house in another part of town for us. He built it himself. Yeah, and it was great. Great house. In fact, it's still there. I drive by it every once in a while, and it still looks great.

SL: Is it kind of a ranch house . . .

BP: Ranch house.

SL: . . . looking thing?

BP: Mh-hmm. Had a patio. And we raised—Dad and I raised rabbits [*SL laughs*], of all things. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, I get a sense that Dad—you and Dad kind of bonded . . .

BP: Yeah . . .

SL: . . . pretty . . .

BP: . . . Dad and I were very close, but I think part of it was I was the only girl. Later, I had four brothers, you know, as time went on. And I just always felt pretty special. I think they made me feel like a princess—that I was the prettiest, that I was the smartest, that I was the nicest, you know.

[00:46:28] SL: I always heard you could outrun 'em all, too.

BP: I could. [*Laughter*] Outkick 'em, too. [*Laughter*] We played football. I was the kicker. [*Laughter*]

SL: And you did play football. I mean, I . . .

BP: Yeah, with them.

SL: You couldn't help but be kind of tomboyish.

BP: I played, yeah, with my brothers, and I wore jeans before I think people wore jeans 'cause they were hand-me-downs. And when I was growing up, my job was to iron the shirts. That was before the era of T-shirts or golf shirts. Everybody wore cotton shirts. And I think at one point I was ironing about thirty-five shirts a week. That was one

of my jobs. And you know, I love to iron. It's a great thing. [*Laughs*]

SL: There is some therapy in that.

BP: Yeah, there is.

SL: Yeah.

BP: So I did—and of course, we didn't have a dryer. You hung things out . . .

SL: On the line.

BP: . . . on the line.

[00:47:25] SL: Which was great. Now let's talk a little bit about the laundry. [*BP laughs*] Was there a washing machine?

BP: There was, and later, when I went to school, there was a washing machine and a—no, I don't know if—there may have been a dryer down in the basement, but that's where my study room was—down there. That's where I studied.

SL: You mean in Fayetteville?

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: But in Bentonville . . .

BP: Don't remember.

SL: I'm sure you had electricity and running water in Bentonville. Is that right?

BP: Yeah. I don't remember the washing machine.

[00:48:00] SL: What about—so was it still an icebox, or had it—were you—were there ice deliveries . . .

BP: You know, I don't know.

SL: . . . in Bentonville? You don't remember that?

BP: I don't remember. Hm-mm. [*Laughs*]

[00:48:13] SL: What about—the streets were paved?

BP: Oh yeah. Mh-hmm.

SL: Okay.

BP: Yeah, it was a darling town. Still is. Precious town.

SL: And . . .

BP: The old town.

SL: . . . y'all had one car?

BP: Of course. Just one car.

SL: Do you remember what it was?

BP: Mercury, I think.

SL: Mercury.

BP: Yeah.

SL: That's interesting.

BP: A coupe.

SL: A coupe.

BP: I think so.

[00:48:37] SL: You'd think with all the kids, you'd . . .

BP: Yeah. Well, there were only . . .

SL: I guess there was just two . . .

BP: . . . at that point just three, so . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: And they had those velour seats, you know. [*Laughter*] Very funny.

[00:48:52] SL: Well, what about the—were there—was there a movie house in Bentonville? Do you ever remember going to see a movie in Bentonville?

BP: No.

SL: How long were y'all in Bentonville? Do you remember that?

BP: I think I moved there when I was five and left there at nine, so that would've been, what, four years probably.

SL: So it may have been a little bit early for you to start . . .

BP: Remember . . .

SL: . . . goin' to movies.

BP: . . . movies. I don't think that was in the . . .

SL: You don't remember newsreels of the war or . . .

BP: No, I don't.

[00:49:28] SL: What about—was there a radio in the house?

BP: Hmm, there must've been. I don't remember it, though.

SL: Okay.

BP: Don't remember it.

SL: We'll talk about this memory thing.

[00:49:39] BP: David has great memories of sitting around the radio and listening to fights and *The Shadow* and all of these various things.

SL: And that was real technology. That was . . .

BP: But see, I don't remember us doing that. I think we were encouraged to play outside and also use our imagination. Like, Mother would—made us a—or me, particularly—a playhouse in the attic. And the

fantasy of TV or movies—now, Mother always told me that I was—she named me after Barbara Stanwyck. So I must've gone to the movies with her. She loved movies. And maybe I saw Roy Rogers and Gene Autrey.

SL: Most . . .

BP: Possible.

SL: Really popular stars back then.

BP: Popular guys. [*Laughs*]

[00:50:35] SL: What about musical instruments? Was there a piano in the house, or did anyone—did you ever . . .

BP: There was not.

SL: Do you remember hearing any live music anywhere in Bentonville or . . .

BP: My . . .

SL: . . . growing up?

BP: . . . Uncle Jake played the fiddle, and it was beautiful. Mother played the guitar a little bit, but not a lot. But I think she was pretty busy.

[*Laughter*]

SL: Yeah. Well, you know . . .

BP: No, I don't remember—maybe except for church. [*Laughs*] Church. And I still like the Methodist Church best 'cause they have the best songs. And the congregation used to really sing. It was important. And I think the Baptist has good songs, good hymns. Presbyterians are pretty staid. That's what I became when I—although I love the

Presbyterian Church. I think I remember the music more from church than anywhere else.

[00:51:43] SL: Was there—remind me—I want to get back to Uncle Jake a little bit later. But as far as church and church influences in the house—let's say that you're sitting down for dinner or for supper. Supper would be the later meal. Was grace ever said at the table?

BP: No, you know, I don't think it was. I don't think it was. I think we were pretty free-spirited and, I would think, not terribly religious. Now, of course, when I married David, his family's very religious. They're bluestocking Presbyterians, and every time the door opened, they were in the church. And so I did that a lot when we were early married. I went to church with them all the time. But we were Methodists, and we pretty much just had a good time. I've always thought that the sermon was just a lot like a Rotary speech. You know [SL laughs], it wasn't heavy on—certainly, not heavy on sin.

SL: Right.

[00:52:51] BP: Maybe forgiveness, kindness. I think those were the things that were emphasized, not black heart or—you know, some churches that make you feel so guilty of sin. We never had that. And Mother never gave it to us, either. You know, I mean, we—I grew up pretty guiltless [laughter], whether that was good or not. [Laughter] I don't know. But we did not have that kind of message laid on us, as I recall. And of course, in Fayetteville the Methodist church was a wonderful place, but it was a big social club. You know, we had MYF at

night. We went to Sunday school. We had Bible school, and it was all just a bunch of fun.

SL: Well [*BP laughs*], so I want to—before we move on to Fayetteville—you were in Bentonville for four or five years?

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: And Dad was still working for Dyke? Is that right?

BP: Mh-hmm. Dyke Brothers Lumber. Mh-hmm.

SL: And he also did some of his own contract work or . . .

BP: No.

SL: No?

BP: Hm-mm. He worked for—he may have even—before I was born, they lived in Rogers before I was born.

SL: Huh.

BP: Then we moved—they moved to Westville, and I was born. But my dad may have just been a truck driver for the lumber company in Rogers.

SL: I see.

[00:54:28] BP: Then he moved up maybe to assistant manager, and then manager. But no, he did not have a workshop, even though he was very good at refinishing things and building things. And of course, Gary and you and others have gotten that wonderful talent. No, he did not do outside work. He was active in the Exchange Club and some of the civic clubs, or he went fishing. You know, he'd . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: No, he did not do outside work at that point.

SL: But—yeah.

BP: That came later.

[00:55:07] SL: So what was the—he got offered a better job in Fayetteville? Is that . . .

BP: I think it was a promotion. Mh-hmm.

SL: It was still with Dyke Lumber.

BP: Yes.

SL: And . . .

BP: And later, I think, he worked for City Lumber and maybe even another lumber company. I'm tryin' to remember. But that was his career up until you all were born, and then he worked for—he had a brief period there where he had his own company and built house—a house. But then he went to work for Carlton as an estimator.

SL: I remember that name.

BP: I think that was your era.

SL: I remember . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . that announcement at the breakfast table. [00:55:51] So you—what about—you were in public schools, though, in Bentonville.

BP: Yeah, always.

SL: Did you have a favorite subject?

BP: I don't remember.

SL: Any . . .

BP: When I . . .

SL: . . . teachers stand out . . .

BP: No.

SL: . . . that you can remember?

BP: Hm-mm.

SL: Okay.

BP: In Fayetteville I had fabulous teachers, fabulous English teachers, fabulous teachers period. Mrs. Vandergriff and others that were wonderful teachers, inspiring teachers. But I don't remember any teachers from Bentonville.

[00:56:29] SL: What about—were there county fairs that—back—or do you not remember that till you got to Fayetteville?

BP: You know, Bentonville had a racetrack. I don't know if you knew that. They raced horses. I think it may have been the horses with the buggies. But I was a—when I was four, I guess, or five, I was a majorette for the parades, you know. Little. [SL laughs] But no, I don't remember the cou—I remember parades, sort of.

SL: In Bentonville?

BP: Mh-hmm. Parades used to be very big . . .

SL: You bet.

BP: . . . throughout Arkansas, and it gave everybody a chance to get together. I don't know whether it was the Fourth of July or if it would've been connected to the county fairs. But I do remember a few parades. More so in Bentonville, I think, than in Fayetteville. I

don't too much remember.

[00:57:37] SL: Well, they're great entertainment . . .

BP: Yeah, they are fun.

SL: Marching bands and . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . floats and . . .

BP: Floats. I think the . . .

SL: . . . politicians and . . .

BP: I used to work on the floats, maybe, for Sub Debs in high school or somethin'. Yeah.

[00:57:52] SL: Well, before we head to Fayetteville, I want to get back to Uncle Jake because I get this impression that he was a little bit rascally or something. He—I mean, he . . .

BP: He may have . . .

SL: He . . .

BP: . . . been. My grandmother—great-grandmother—was very severe on Uncle Jake. She ordered him around all the time, and [*SL laughs*] she didn't want him to have much to do with us.

SL: Influence.

BP: She was very possessive. She was possessive of Mother, and she was, I think, possessive of us. We didn't even think about it, of course.

SL: Yeah.

[00:58:34] BP: But the few times I remember Uncle Jake is playing his fiddle, which was really fun. And she had one of those porches that

ran the length of the house, and it was screened in. And we sat—we were out there a lot, and that's where people would . . .

SL: Gather.

BP: . . . come and be entertained or whatever. And the thing on the porch, which was there hanging on nails, were those huge, two-men saws—two-man saws that they used to—yeah, they used to harvest the trees with. And one fell on me one time, and I had the scar forever on my hand. You know, they were . . .

SL: Heavy.

BP: Yeah. Big.

SL: Lucky you didn't lose a finger.

BP: [*Laughs*] Well . . .

SL: I'm serious.

BP: I think it was just a little nick. I think it wasn't anything, you know, really. But I did have a scar from it forever. [*Laughter*]

[00:59:35] SL: Well, so do you think you were messin' around with it or something or . . .

BP: Probably.

SL: Yeah, you probably brought it on yourself.

BP: Probably not doin' the right thing.

SL: Or maybe Porter [*laughs*] . . .

BP: Porter may have been the culprit. He was pretty culprit. [*Laughter*]

Oh!

[00:59:53] SL: Okay, so Dad gets a promotion . . .

TM: Hey Scott, we might want to stop. I think we've been about an hour.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[01:00:01] SL: We're in our [BP laughs] second set here.

BP: Yes.

SL: We have come from Westville. We've been going back and forth to Cass. We moved to Bentonville. We're on our way to Fayetteville, but on our way to Fayetteville, I want to talk a little bit more about Uncle Jake. [BP laughs] And of course, it's so interesting to me that our great-grandmother was so severe with him. But he would come pick you up in a wagon and mules . . .

BP: Yeah, he was . . .

SL: . . . and cross the river, and then . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . you mentioned he plays violin—fiddle.

BP: He does. Fiddle, I think it would be.

[01:00:43] SL: Were there any other musicians that—did he ever play—did you ever get to hear any other live music . . .

BP: You know . . .

SL: . . . on that porch?

BP: I—there may have been other people that came to sing, but I don't remember. I don't remember.

[01:01:01] SL: Did Grandma—when you—ever you were with her, were you ever there on Sundays? Was there ever a trip to church or . . .

BP: No.

SL: Did she have a Bible in her home? You don't remember that.

BP: She was a great reader, and there were books stacked everywhere, but interestingly enough [*laughs*], I don't remember a Bible.

SL: Remember a Bible. Well . . .

BP: And you know, Uncle Allan, of course, was a minister, so there must've been a Bible. But you know what? I don't remember. And I don't remember going to any church.

SL: While you were visiting.

BP: But there were—there are beautiful churches throughout that valley. But no, I don't remember. I don't remember. I have a feeling that the mountains, the outside, the landscape was her church.

SL: Yeah.

BP: I think it was Mother's, too, being—you know, loving nature and I think they saw God's beauty, but I think it was more in an organic way, if that sounds . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: That they worshiped in a different way. It wasn't in a house, a house of God, I think. So I don't know. Sounds good.

[01:02:26] SL: Okay, so [*BP laughs*] we're moving from Bentonville to Fayetteville.

BP: Yes.

SL: What struck you about Fayetteville? Compare Fayetteville at that time to Bentonville at that time.

BP: Well, I went to Washington School, and that was wonderful. And great teachers there. I think I learned everything I needed to know about English in Washington School because it carried me all the way through junior high school, high school, and my first year of college I was in an advanced class. But you know, of course, English was very emphasized then and writing and literature and poetry, even at that age. And I remember, you know, that I learned so much, maybe in the sixth grade, from a teacher called Mrs. Bridenstine. Very severe. Very. But we learned, you know. [*Laughs*]

[01:03:33] SL: Now, y'all—when you first moved to Fayetteville, were you out on . . .

BP: We lived in the country.

SL: . . . Highway 45?

BP: We did. We lived in the country out Highway 45. Now it's all grown up, but then it was country. And we lived a little bit across the street from the **Jackson** farm, which is now totally developed. In fact, I think a school is there now. And we loved it out there. It was fun. We had thirteen acres of woods and . . .

[01:04:09] SL: Is that mostly up the hill?

BP: Mh-hmm. Yeah. We played, though, in those woods all the time. And the top of that was not developed at all. It was all woods. That whole area.

SL: So there were only one or two houses out there back then.

BP: Yes, there were maybe four or five. Not too many. And the other

place—this may be sacrilegious—we played in the cemetery. Fairview cemetery. My mother and dad, brothers are buried there. But at the time, we—that's where we'd play.

SL: It was . . .

BP: It was . . .

SL: . . . much smaller.

BP: Oh yeah, it was much smaller. And it had gates, and it had a fence around it. I don't think it does anymore, but it was real—really fun.

[01:05:02] SL: Was there ever—it seems like I've heard a story about some kind of fire that was on that hillside. Is that . . .

BP: I don't remember.

SL: You don't remember that?

BP: Hm-mm.

SL: Now, was brother Gary born in Fayetteville or . . .

BP: Let's see, Gary would've been born—was Gary born in Bentonville? Let's see. [*Laughs*] Terrible. He must've been born in Westville.

SL: Really?

BP: I guess. I don't know. We'll have to ask him. I can't remember.

[01:05:39] SL: Let's see, you are four . . .

BP: I'm five years older than Gary.

SL: So that—he would've been Bentonville, then.

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: Probably.

BP: Yeah. Mh-hmm. So, see, I'm seventy-six . . .

SL: Or very end of Westville.

BP: Can't remember whether I'm seventy-six or seventy-seven. I think seventy-six.

SL: Well, [19]38 . . .

BP: Yeah. I always . . .

SL: So five. That makes you seventy-five.

BP: Oh, really? No.

SL: If you were born in [19]38?

BP: Okay.

SL: This is 2013.

BP: Okay. I was gettin' ahead of myself.

SL: You're so young. You're . . .

BP: Uh-huh.

SL: Gosh, what a babe. [*Laughter*]

BP: Yeah. [*Laughter*] Right. [*Laughter*] Oh!

[01:06:21] SL: Well, so you were kind of in the country when you moved to Fayetteville, but . . .

BP: We were.

SL: . . . you were going to Washington Elementary grade school . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . on the corner of Maple and Highland.

BP: Yes. Wonderful school.

SL: So that was a bus ride?

BP: Oh no, our dad took us. No, there weren't buses. We didn't—we

weren't bused.

SL: Okay. So Dad took you into town when he—on his way into work.

BP: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

SL: And then brought you back? Is that . . .

BP: We usually would walk from the school down to the lumber yard and play around. And Collier's Drug Store where it now sits was a big, open field. And we'd play around in there. It was [*laughs*] just, you know, a lot.

[01:07:12] SL: Well now, was it Dyke's or City Lumber back . . .

BP: It must've been City by that time. Do you remember where City Lumber was?

SL: It was off Dickson Street.

BP: Well, that's where it was.

SL: It was—oh, right there . . .

BP: Well, there were two lumberyards. One now I think is the bike shop or—over kind of behind the Walton Arts Center. There was a lumberyard there.

SL: There is where it—really?

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: That's interesting.

[01:07:35] BP: And then Dad—I think we—where Collier's drugstore presently is, there was a big empty lot, and then there was—maybe it was City Lumber. Mh-hmm. And we would go down and—it was such a wonderful place. I love lumberyards. All the lumber stacked up.

The big barrels of nails. [*SL laughs*] The brown sacks you could weigh up. You know, we would be very helpful around the lumberyard.

[*Laughter*] I'm sure we drove 'em crazy. The big sand piles. It was really fun. And that's what I remember is that we would oftentimes go there after school. And during the football season, our dad would pick us up and we would go to the Razorback practices, which used to be right there where Hotz Hall is. That was the intramural courts. That's where the Razorbacks practiced. And at that point, you knew all of the players because the school was so small—smaller and the town was certainly smaller. And the football players were just like gods walking among, you know, us. And we would see them on the streets, or we would go watch 'em practice, and you know, it was really . . .

[01:08:59] SL: So this is late [19]40s, early [19]50s.

BP: Yes. Mh-hmm. Late [19]40s, early [19]50s.

SL: Well, there were some great players . . .

BP: There were.

SL: . . . back then.

BP: There were.

SL: Well . . .

BP: And my dad knew a lot of 'em, and he, of course, was good friends with—I don't know—was it Frank Broyles that was there at that point there? We knew all the Razorback coaches. Everybody knew everybody, though. I mean, they went to church with you and . . .

SL: Bowden White.

BP: Bowden Wyatt was there. Course, you know, Coach Barnhill was around. Coach Cole. There were all kinds of wonderful coaches and role models.

SL: The Ferrell family.

BP: Yes. Yeah, Coach Ferrell. Yeah. So anyway, that was—you know, it was really a small town in the [19]50s, and it was a wonderful life. It really was.

[01:10:03] SL: So it was you and Porter at Washington Elementary grade school.

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: And then you'd go down after school—walk down to the lumber yard and [BP laughs] hang out.

BP: Yep. [Laughs]

SL: Try to stay out of trouble. Try to do good. [Laughter]

BP: Try to help.

[01:10:20] SL: What was Dickson Street like back then?

BP: Well, of course, it had a pool hall, which we were—had—girls had to cross the street. They couldn't walk by the pool hall. [Laughter] And it smelled like beer and cigarettes. [Laughs]

SL: Yeah.

BP: Of course, all the boys loved it. This was a little later. And it had some restaurants that had old screen doors. Maybe an old hotel near the railroad tracks. Kind of little mom-and-pop stores down that way. It was way before Jose's. Of course, the other thing was Shipley

bread. They would bake their bread early in the morning, and my brother and I had—after we moved to town, my brother and I had a paper route, and we threw the *Southwest American*. And my dad would drive us down to the bus station, and we would fold all of the papers, and then we would walk through and throw all the newspapers up on the porch.

[01:11:25] SL: So the paper would come in by bus.

BP: Yes.

SL: And then you would fold 'em.

BP: Yeah, and deliver it. We had paper bags, my brother and I. And I was scared because it was still dark. It was, like, four in the morning—four or five or whatever. You had go get it there early. And I would run my route. I would run throughout the Washington [*laughs*] historic area, you know—all in there.

SL: 'Cause it was kind of scary, I guess.

BP: It was scary. Mh-hmm.

SL: Those old houses looked haunted anyway.

BP: Yeah. Dark.

SL: Dark. Yeah. [*BP laughs*] [01:12:05] Well, were there still trees on College Avenue?

BP: Oh yeah, College was beautiful. It was before it was commercialized. Long before. There were beautiful houses and trees that met over the street.

SL: So it was almost like a tunnel.

BP: It was beautiful.

SL: A canopy of trees.

BP: Absolutely beautiful. And then they widened it and took out a lot of the big, old trees. Then they started selling those houses for commercial, which was a pity 'cause some of those houses were really beautiful. And of course, the First Baptist Church was there. There was one commercial venture there. It was the Lewis Brothers automobile, and it was a art deco building, so it was kind of fun. And there might have been a service station in that particular block, but basically it was residential, and it was beautiful. And you know, gradually they really commercialized it, and . . .

SL: Right.

BP: . . . it was no longer the famous street that it was at one point. And the Square was very beautiful and . . .

SL: Very busy.

BP: Yeah, and they had the Boston Store, which was a Fort Smith store, and J. C. Penney's, but everything—oh, Campbell-Bell—see, all of those stores were locally owned. And so, you know, they were really great. The Square was great. And everybody went to the post office to collect their mail or even to pay their bills. My mother used to go around and walk around and pay the gas bill and the water bill—you know, just take it in hand and pay the bills. [*Laughs*]

[01:13:54] SL: How long were y'all out on Highway 45?

BP: We weren't there that long. I would say maybe we had moved into

town by the time I was in the sixth grade. And all of my friends lived in that neighborhood—Washington Street, Willow, the Willow district. And we would walk together down Mount Sequoyah, and then I would go by one friend's house, then the next friend's house, and about ten of us walked to school together every day. It was really nice.

[01:14:34] SL: So the house out in the country—it was really not a country home, was it, or—I mean, it had running water and electricity.

BP: Oh yeah. Oh no, no.

SL: All the modern . . .

BP: It was a nice house.

SL: . . . conveniences.

BP: The house was always too small for us. My mother had taken an upright piano and put it in one area to make a bedroom, but it was really just a two-bedroom house. And my brothers had a room, and I had a room, and then they, Mother and Dad, were, you know, behind the piano. Sounds funny, but it was an L-shaped room, and she made a—you know, that was their bedroom.

SL: A kind of space behind the piano. That's interesting that she got a piano.

BP: She had a upright piano, but I don't remember everybody—anybody playing it. That's funny. No. I don't know.

SL: Hmm. I wonder—was . . .

BP: It was a very modest house. Had a screened-in back porch, a small kitchen, two bedrooms and a bath.

[01:15:39] SL: Was Uncle Allan around during that time?

BP: No.

SL: No. That's so fascinating that all of a sudden there's a little piano in the house.

BP: I don't know where that came from, but I know she partitioned off the—there was really basically just the one room. It was L-shaped, and it was the living room/dining room. And then she made a bedroom at the end of the—in the L.

SL: I always heard that she felt like that was too far out in the country, too—that . . .

BP: Well, she wanted me to—us—to have town friends, if that's the right word. Course, we had friends anyway 'cause Mother was so lively and her house was always the center of—everybody gathered at our house, growing up.

SL: You know, I experienced that . . .

BP: We . . .

SL: . . . in my growing up.

BP: Everybody came to our house. It was really small, but Mother baked a cake every day, as you know. When you came in from school, there was this marvelous cake baking, and she kept the coffee pot on all day. She would make pot after pot. [*SL laughs*] And people just came. Everybody came. There were bridge parties—just neighbors and friends, students. I learned to play bridge there. A lot of people did. And . . .

[01:17:06] SL: Now, are we talkin' on Assembly Drive?

BP: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Little house. We didn't even have the big room on that house until it burned, see.

SL: Yeah.

BP: We would all gather in that little tiny breakfast room or the living room, and we learned to dance. Mother taught us to dance. We went to a formal dance teacher, but Mother's the one that taught us to dance. [*Laughter*]

[01:17:33] SL: Well now . . .

BP: Oh, brother.

SL: . . . how did it come about to get that house on the corner of Assembly and Maple? I—what—did **John—Mr. Ritter** own that property and did he . . .

BP: He did. Dad bought it from him, but Mr. Hammond, who built the house on Washington Street—the big house across the street from you.

SL: Yeah.

BP: That was Virginia Hammond's house. He was in the real estate business, and he wanted the property—those acres behind our house where we lived.

SL: Of course.

BP: And so he bought the acres. Not for much, I don't think. At the time,

it was raw land. But see, he developed that entire hillside and the top of the . . .

SL: So that's Hammond . . .

BP: Hammond.

SL: . . . Avenue right there.

BP: Mh-hmm. Yeah. And then so that enabled us to move into town and buy the Ritter house. And it's possible—I can't really remember—it's possible [*laughs*] that house cost \$19,000 at that time. It was a new house, you know. Of course, Mother made the garden an incredible place and—yeah. So there we were.

[01:18:47] SL: So Porter was not in elementary grade school. He didn't go to Washington Elementary, I guess.

BP: He didn't.

SL: If you got there in sixth grade . . .

BP: Fourth—no, I went there in the fourth grade.

SL: In the fourth grade.

BP: Yeah, we still . . .

SL: So he would've been there . . .

BP: . . . went there.

SL: . . . in the fifth or sixth . . .

BP: There weren't that many. Now there are elementary schools all over everywhere and junior highs, too. But at the time, there was Jefferson, Washington, and . . .

SL: Leverett.

BP: . . . Leverett. See, there weren't that many. Then the university also had a school . . .

SL: Mh-hmm. Peabody.

BP: . . . that a lot of the university children went to. No, there weren't that many, so Porter did go to Washington. He went to junior high school over there where that horrible big high-rise is for old . . .

SL: Hillcrest. Was that Hillcrest Junior High?

BP: Well, you know, we used to have a beautiful little gym there. It was just a jewel of a gym for the junior high school, and then the school was there. Then they tore all that down and built that retirement home that is a high-rise. I don't know if you the one . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . I'm talkin' about.

SL: Hillcrest Towers.

[01:20:00] BP: And so . . .

SL: I think that's right.

BP: So that was a pity because that school and that gym were beautiful, and that's junior high.

SL: Well, so that was junior high. and there was still Fayetteville High School . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . where it sits now.

BP: Yeah, Fayetteville High School. Yes.

SL: It was a different deal.

BP: It was. And of course, my first job other than the paper route—let's see, wait a minute. Maybe I was a basket girl at the pool in the summertimes.

SL: Wilson Park Pool?

BP: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

SL: Basket girl.

BP: Basket girl. I was the person that when you came to pay thirty-five cents or whatever it was to swim—I gave everybody their basket.

SL: With a little [*BP laughs*] pin that they could pin on the . . .

BP: They pinned it on their swimsuits.

SL: They had the number of their basket. [*BP laughs*]

[01:20:49] BP: That's right, and it was a wonderful job because there was Ronnie Hawkins, who was not a mus—he was a semimusician at that point. He had a band. But he and others . . .

SL: Doug Douglas?

BP: Doug Douglas. All of those wonderful athletes, really, would do high-dives and all of the—and you know, it was really exotica at the pool. [*Laughter*] And—but after that or before I was a—worked in the cafeteria on Mount Sequoyah, which was, as you know, the Methodist Assembly, and they had conventions and things like that. And of course, I could walk to that job, which was really a kind of a neat thing, you know. It was beautiful early in the morning. You had to be there five-thirty or whatever for breakfast. You'd walk up that mountain . . .

SL: In the dark again.

BP: You know, it was fun. [*SL laughs*] It was great. Good life.

[01:21:58] SL: So in Washington Elementary grade school, you had a very severe sixth-grade teacher that taught you everything about English.

BP: Yes.

SL: Now, in those days [*BP laughs*]*—*you know, you were saying how you learned to write. Also, in the earlier grades you literally learned to write.

BP: Oh yes, you did. Uh-huh. You had penmanship.

SL: Which is probably a fading art . . .

BP: Oh, I think . . .

SL: . . . these days.

BP: . . . it's gone.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Even my children print. They don't really write, and I think that's a gone thing, you know.

[01:22:38] SL: Well, they don't let me fill out any forms by hand.  
[*Laughter*] And I had the lessons.

BP: Yeah, people . . .

SL: But anyway . . .

BP: . . . used to be proud of their penmanship. Girls went to a lot of trouble to have beautiful writing, and that was fun. [*Laughs*] Yeah.

[01:22:57] SL: Well, so [*BP laughs*] what about the movies? The movie

houses in Fayetteville when you got here.

BP: Yes. There was the Ozark, which was right there on College Avenue.

State of the art. We loved it. And there was the U of A, which was—you know, now I think it's a hippie . . .

SL: A head shop.

BP: . . . head shop. But that was the first movie house that had a graduated—there was no . . .

SL: Stadium seating.

BP: . . . bad seat. You know, you walked up, but it was all—it was like a ramp, and so every seat was good. That was the UARK. And then there was the Palace on the Square, and there was one other movie theater, which was very disreputable, and I don't think anybody went to it much. Royal. The Royal.

[01:23:56] SL: I remember people talkin' about the Royal. Now, where was it? Do you remember?

BP: It was where Tim's Pizza would be right now, on the Square. You know, Tim's Pizza?

SL: Yeah, so there were two—you had the Palace and the Royal . . .

BP: And the Royal.

SL: . . . and the Ozark . . .

BP: Ark.

SL: . . . within blocks of each other.

BP: Yeah, and there was the drive-in theater, so we were rich in . . .

SL: The 71 Drive-In Theatre.

BP: They were—we were rich in movies, and everybody went to movies. That was a big thing. And next to the Palace, there was a little tiny hamburger joint. And after the movie people—it was—wasn't probably eight feet wide, but everybody would pour in there and . . .

[01:24:43] SL: That was not the Palace Drug Store.

BP: Oh, no. Hm-mm.

SL: Okay.

BP: This was really probably a dump. [*SL laughs*] But there was the Palace Drug Store.

SL: Yeah.

BP: There was also, of course, Collier's, which did have a—you know, you could get milk shakes—a fountain. People—drug stores used to have fountains. And those were very popular for dates and things like that. Booths—you know, all that stuff. So . . .

[01:25:12] SL: What kind of [*BP laughs*] school-organized activity did you participate in?

BP: Well, we had a little group called the Sub Debs, and I don't know what that meant. I don't know what the Sub meant or the Debs—I . . .

SL: Not quite debutantes?

BP: I guess so. I guess so. Anyway, we had a little group—maybe twenty-five [*laughs*] girls. And then there was another group called the **Hi-Scis** or something like—**High-Society Girls**. There was a—that was one. The boys had a little group. Can't remember the name of it. And they were sponsors of dances, and we had big formals and,

you know, that kind of thing. And of course, everybody—I was on the flag team, but everybody—or fifty of us belonged to the Peppers club.

SL: Now, that's high school.

BP: Yeah, cheerleaders, Peppers. I was on the flag team. That's the kind of thing we did. Yeah.

[01:26:25] SL: And your brothers were . . .

BP: Football players.

SL: . . . football guys.

BP: Mh-hmm. Yes. Yes, they were.

SL: So you are—you get to Fayetteville. Let's see, that would be early [19]50s—late [19]40s, early [19]50s. What's going on as far as race relations go?

BP: Well, you know, our class, [19]54 high school class, was the first to integrate in Fayetteville without even so much as a whisper. It all went very well. Virgil Blossom was the superintendent of schools, and I think he did a fabulous job. But really, I think the people in Fayetteville saw no problem. And Fayetteville, in a way, because of the university, has always had more diversity and maybe a little bit more learning and things like that. And it was diversified, you know. And people were nonjudgmental. You didn't see prejudice. You didn't—anyway, that went perfectly, and my class was the first to graduate. I had—there were three African Americans in our class, and it went without a hitch. Of course, there were, not too long before that, restricted towns such as Harrison and Rogers. And when the

Bulldogs went to play in Harrison the first time with Preston Lackey, who was one of our African Americans . . .

SL: Graduates.

BP: . . . they refused to play. Harrison would not play with us because we had a black player. So you see, there was—we were—I think Fayetteville's always been ahead of its time in many ways. Certainly, I think, in race relations. And I think I was lucky not to grow up, you know, in a place that did have prejudice, and so I never got that. I never knew that there was a big difference between Jews [*laughs*] and Christians . . .

SL: Right.

BP: . . . for instance.

SL: Right.

BP: It wasn't an issue. And . . .

[01:28:58] SL: It seems like I kind of remember that the African Americans at the Ozark Theatre would be in the balcony.

BP: Oh, see, I don't know. I don't remember.

SL: You don't remember that?

BP: Huh-uh, I don't. Now, of course, they lived in Tin Cup, which is right behind—I don't know if they call it Tin Cup anymore. That's probably not correct behavior, but that's where . . .

SL: That's what it was known as.

BP: Yes, Tin . . .

SL: Everyone referred to it as . . .

BP: Tin Cup.

SL: . . . Tin Cup. [01:29:30] And that was because there was a—supposedly a tin cup hanging on a tree limb by the spring or something like that.

BP: Yeah, I—there is a little creek that runs through there.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Now I think they've changed that creek to a different name but—you know, which—I don't know. Sometimes it matters, sometimes it doesn't.

SL: Yeah.

[01:29:53] BP: But there were great people. We knew some of the African Americans that lived in Fayetteville—Buddy Hayes, who was really, they say, a shoeshine man, but he was so much more than that.

SL: Well, let's talk about Buddy Hayes for a minute.

BP: Well, he was a leader in the black community, and he was a good musician, and he nurtured musicians. My brother, Porter, was very close to Buddy Hayes. Course, bein' a girl, I didn't get to go around musicians or anything like that, but they were close friends. And he was close to many people. He—I—sure, he nurtured Ronnie Hawkins. You know, Ronnie Hawkins—later, "The Hawk," later—and The Band. I mean, all of those people are connected. And then—let's see, who else would've been around at that time that we knew? Jessie . . .

SL: Jessie—yeah, she . . .

BP: Can't think of her name. She was a friend of Mom's.

SL: Yeah, she helped—she was a—helped clean the house . . .

BP: Yeah and . . .

SL: . . . with Mom.

BP: And—but she also was a leader in her own community.

SL: She was, and she ended up being on the county board, I think.

BP: Yes.

SL: Or justice of the peace or something like that.

[01:31:19] BP: There were you know, there were some really good people, and I just never got the prejudice thing. It may have existed, but in our house—well, my dad was raised in the delta, so he had an innate prejudice, but we never got it.

SL: Yeah.

BP: We never got it. I don't know whether it was Mother's influence. When Dad would say somethin', we'd just laugh or we would just roll our eyes . . .

SL: Right.

BP: . . . you know. It just wasn't in the storybook. But later when I went to Camden, I saw prejudice for the first time when I was married 'cause, you know, Camden's a—has a large community of African Americans. And most of them probably are in the servant class or, you know, yard—and there's a vast difference. And I was surprised when I saw this for the first time—that you, you know, didn't shake [laughs] somebody's hand and—anyway—and you never called

anybody Mrs. or Mr., or there was—there were all these silly rules that I'm sure I stepped on it a lot of times, but then, you know, it was different.

[01:32:44] SL: I guess Springdale was considered a sundown town.

BP: It was. Mh-hmm. Springdale was.

SL: And there were—you know, the whole—and it does seem like that the football and some of the other sports kind of accentuated the divide . . .

BP: Mh-hmm. I think so.

SL: . . . between communities that had embraced desegregation and those that hadn't.

BP: Mh-hmm. It's possible, too, that—I know there was a book written—name of it may have been *Sort*, but it's about how people gather together that are like-minded. Like in Springdale, I would say that more white people live there—maybe more—you know, we—they went to their sort, and they formed their community.

SL: Birds of a feather.

[01:33:41] BP: And Fayetteville was just open, and people gathered there, and I think they still do, because there's a certain acceptance of people and who they are. And I don't think anybody ever made a big deal, and possibly we just didn't know any better. But I don't think people differentiated between gay people and straight people and—you know, it [*laughs*—I don't know, it wasn't on the radar for people to look down. I don't know, maybe it was in the boys' world, but

certainly a lot of us never saw the difference, I guess.

SL: So . . .

BP: It was an innocent time, I think, in a lot of ways, and I think I was lucky to grow up in such an atmosphere. And I think it is—Fayetteville is a part of it, but I think, you know, my parents and our family was a part of it. We, I think, were taught to be accepting and kind and polite and all of the things that you may not see so much anymore among young people. I'm not sure. It's hard to say.

[01:35:04] SL: What about—how did your—our parents—you being the only girl—how did they handle your dating or . . .

BP: Oh, my goodness. My father was so strict. Ugh! He was so strict, and of course, my older brother—Porter was also strict. He did not—I mean, there were boys that he did not want me to date. So I didn't date a lot. I don't think, really, until I was about sixteen did I actually have a date date. But my father—when I was a freshman in college there was a famous football player, Billy Ray Smith . . .

SL: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

BP: . . . and he asked me out for a Coke date, which was a common thing to go to Jug Wheeler's and get a Coke. And [*laughs*] my father actually went on the date with us. [*SL laughs*] He would not let me go—and I was a freshman in college! I mean, you know, how embarrassing. How embarrassing! [*SL laughs*] And of course, Billy Ray Smith never asked me to do anything again. [*Laughs*]

SL: Again. [*Laughter*] Well, you know, it's . . .

BP: It was funny. Now, Dad would have football players to the house. He would have the Razorbacks come to the house and . . .

SL: I remember that.

BP: . . . he would give 'em a home-cooked meal, and gosh, it was just wonderful. But no, they were too old for me. Even if they were freshmen, they were too old for me.

[01:36:41] SL: Well, I have to say that even Ronnie Hawkins said everyone was afraid of Bruce Lunsford. [*Laughter*] They just didn't [*laughs*—they just—it was not worth it. [*Laughter*]

BP: I agree. And I think Porter was strong.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Porter had a strong reputation. So yes, I was innocent. [*Laughter*]  
Oh, brother.

SL: Well. [*Door opens*] I . . .

JE: Let's break here.

SL: Okay.

JE: Archie and lunch are here.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[01:37:17]SL: Okay, we just had lunch a [*BP laughs*] catered in from Herman's.

BP: Which was big treat.

SL: Which is probably another Fayetteville story we can get to later. [*BP laughs*] So—well, maybe now. I mean, I think where we left off in our

second session was we were startin' to talk about your dating career.

BP: Which was short.

SL: Short and [*laughter*]*—because everyone . . .*

BP: Very short.

SL: . . . was afraid of Dad and your—our parents were very strict with you and . . .

BP: They were. Yes.

[01:37:50] SL: But you know, back then weren't . . .

BP: Everybody's parents . . .

SL: Everybody was strict.

BP: Everybody's parents were strict. You knew who the boy was, and you knew his family, and if you didn't, you didn't go. And it was—I think it was accepted. I don't think anybody ever really rebelled, you know, about it that I know of. It was just—that was the way it was. And I think the thing that my parents liked so much about David is when he asked me out the first time, he came in and met my parents and visited with 'em, you know, like he didn't really come to pick me up. He came to see them. [*Laughs*] And they always liked him, and he of course, was four years older, but they liked him immediately, and I think they trusted him, you know, for whatever reason. They liked him.

[01:38:53] SL: Well, you know, he writes about seeing you for the first time on campus.

BP: That's what he says.

SL: Noticing you. And he [*BP laughs*] had a feeling about you.

BP: He did, he did.

SL: And I suspect that he wanted to meet your parents to get to know them anyway.

BP: Maybe.

SL: 'Cause it would probably reveal some things about you.

BP: Maybe. Maybe.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Possible.

[01:39:23] SL: Possibly. Or he could have just felt like he had to do it to have a chance. [*Laughs*]

BP: I think that he was that way with everybody.

SL: Yeah.

BP: I think that he took an interest in anyone he met, and of course, I know that was a date, but I think he would've visited with any—you know, he visited with everybody in general. I remember goin' to Prairie Grove. There was a general store there. And he—I think he liked to buy blue jeans there. I can't remember. Elton Skelton was the owner. And gosh, he went in a visited with Elton Skelton and all the people in the store. And it was—we were actually on a date [*SL laughs*], but that was the date, to go to Prairie Grove. [*Laughter*]

SL: Not exactly . . .

BP: Very interesting. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . a Coke date.

BP: So . . .

SL: You made me think of something. You know, somewhere in my memory I heard at one point in time that DP never dated anyone more than once or twice.

BP: Three times, max for . . .

SL: Three times, max.

BP: . . . David. Mh-hmm.

SL: And it was a big deal when . . .

BP: He asked me for the fourth date.

SL: Yes.

BP: I did not know that, but some of his friends that he knew in some of the sororities and—told me later that that was big. [*SL laughs*] I didn't think about it. I didn't know that.

SL: Yeah.

BP: So . . .

[01:40:59] SL: Well, so now we kind of skimmed over the last part of your high school career. We got . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . derailed about dating, and we jumped up to DP, understandably. But what was—I mean, you were involved with Peppers [*BP laughs*], the Sub Debs . . .

BP: The pep club. [*Laughs*]

[01:41:23] SL: Yeah. And the games is where you kind of—the football games, the athletic contests where you kind of came across some real

segregation-desegregation issues and . . .

BP: Well, yes. You know, we did not—I don't think we were exposed to it that much, but yes, we—there were incidences, and I think if anything it hardened our resolve to make Preston and others feel like they were a part of Fayetteville High School. I think everybody rallied . . .

SL: Around them.

BP: Put their arms around them and tried to . . .

SL: Protect.

BP: Yeah, protect them. I don't know that it was even conscious. I just think it was the—and we had these marvelous teachers in high school. [01:42:21] Miss Bell, who was the principal, but she also taught a advanced English course. You read a book a week, and you wrote a paper a week, and it was probably one of the greatest courses I've ever taken. And we had Miss Ellis, who taught what they called, at that time, social studies. It was government. And Miss Boggs, who taught Latin. There were all these just unbelievably dedicated teachers that were inspirational, you know. They were great teachers. And I think everybody just wanted to do the right thing because of the example that was set for all of us. And of course, Fayetteville High School was much smaller then. You know, I'm not sure how many people we had in our graduating class. It could have been a hundred and seventy, maybe. But it was not a big school, and everybody knew everybody. And Coach Vandergriff was our football coach, and you know, high standards were set, and I think people tried very hard to

meet those standards. I think by example we were inspired to do the right thing.

[01:43:41] SL: There were strong ideals.

BP: Very strong ideals. And in government—Miss Ellis was very big on giving back, participating—all—of course, to vote then you had to be twenty-one, I think. It was long before the eighteen year. And you know, we were taught to participate, to be a good citizen—all the things that you would want, you know, for your own children to be aware of. And I think they—we were taught never to litter. *[Laughs]* I mean, just all the things that you don't see very much now. But at that time, standard procedure.

[01:44:30] SL: I thought of something that came up while we were eating lunch, and that was our mother being your den mother.

BP: She was the den mother for the Brownies which, you know, that would've been fourth and fifth grade, I think. I never went on to be a Girl Scout. I don't know why. But we were Brownies. Wonderful little troop. *[Laughs]* And Mother was the den mother, and she was wonderful. She would take us on hikes and fix this marvelous food, you know, and it was a big deal. We had a good time.

[01:45:08] SL: So she made brownies.

BP: She made brownies for the Brownies. *[Laughs]* Corny, but everybody loved her.

SL: And what was the soft drink of choice?

BP: Grapette in the little bottles.

SL: In the little bottles, which [*BP laughs*] ironically was a Camden-produced . . .

BP: It was. Isn't that interesting? Yeah, but I can drink one to this day and think about bein' a Brownie [*SL laughs*] with my mother.

[*Laughs*]

SL: Well, they're a great drink.

BP: Yes.

SL: I'm having one now.

BP: Yeah, they [*laughter*] are good. They're good.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

BP: Yeah.

[01:45:44] SL: Okay, so I'm tryin' to think about these teachers. Were your grades good?

BP: Excellent. I was an A student.

SL: You were an A student.

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: I bet that drove your brothers crazy.

BP: [*Laughs*] I don't know. I don't think anybody told me to be an A student. I just . . .

SL: You liked it.

BP: I liked it. I liked learning. I liked the whole process.

SL: Did you take any art courses or . . .

BP: Did not.

SL: . . . drama courses or . . .

BP: They're—those things were really not offered. Home ec.

[01:46:25] SL: Home ec. That's right. [BP laughs] Okay, now what was your graduating class? What year?

BP: It would've been [19]56—[19]56. Yeah.

SL: So do you go—you graduate Fayetteville High School, and you immediately the next fall go to the University of Arkansas?

BP: Yes, yes. We—in our family, all of us had jobs. We all worked in order to go to school or to have any walkin'-around money as we like to say. We had to earn it. Dad did not at that time, you know, give you . . .

SL: There was no allowance.

BP: There was no allowance. No. So . . .

[01:47:09] SL: Did they restrict what you could spend your money on?

BP: No. Hm-mm. I know I saved all of my money from my paper route one year to buy a watch. I went down to the jewelry store and bought a watch. [Laughs] And I mean, it took me, what, nine months [laughs] to . . .

SL: Was it Perry's or . . .

BP: I think we made . . .

SL: Perry's or Swift's Jewelry?

BP: You know, probably Swift's. But I—we saved our money, but I think throwing a paper, you made five dollars a month or—it was minimal. And the cafeteria was twenty-five cents an hour for working, you know, on Mount Sequoyah. It was [laughs]—minimum wage was not a concept, you know. And I babysat. I learned—I made—I might

have made fifty cents an hour or seventy-five cents an hour babysitting, so—but we had to earn our own money. We saved our own money, and Dad might pay the tuition. But the books, everything else, was on us. So we were always scramblin' around to get a job. I worked at the Boston Store, at Penney's, all around, probably, you know, to save money to go to school. And most of my girlfriends just wanted to get married and have a family, but I wanted a college education. [*Laughs*] And I think I'm the only one that didn't get it, I think. [*Laughter*] I think I was one of the first ones married . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . because David was older and ready to launch out. And maybe—but I think all the other girls got that degree. It's funny.

[01:49:04] SL: So I guess you were still at home when I came along . . .

BP: Yes, we never . . .

SL: . . . and our younger brother, David.

BP: . . . lived in a dorm, nor did I go through rush. Just wasn't in the cards, you know. We lived at home.

[01:49:21] SL: So did you used to babysit . . .

BP: Of course.

SL: See, I don't remember that.

BP: Oh, you were our little darling.

SL: [*Laughs*] What did you do to me?

BP: All the girls took you around. We went—you went everywhere with us when you were little. Everywhere. You had real long, blond, curly

hair. You were just like our little mascot.

SL: This explains everything to me. [*Laughter*]

BP: We'd take you to Jug Wheeler's in the afternoon. You know, we—  
yeah, you were part of the group. Part of the crew. [*Laughter*]

SL: That's funny.

BP: Yes. But see, by the time David came along, I was just about out the  
door, you know. He's—so . . .

[01:50:08] SL: I remember David picking you up for a date one time.

BP: You do? Yeah.

SL: I tell you what sticks in my mind. He would hold out his arm . . .

BP: Oh, I know it.

SL: . . . like this.

BP: He's a muscle guy.

SL: And I would do pull-ups.

BP: Yeah.

SL: Or he would pull me up . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . with his arm.

BP: He was a muscle guy. He—when he was in Camden there was a man  
that owned a gym right down the street in his garage. And David went  
there every day before school or after school, and he worked out every  
day at a time when that—people just—I don't think it—I think he was  
ahead of his time. And he was—had a—very strong. He had good,  
strong muscles. Yeah, that's right. I think he used to do you and

David both, you know.

SL: I think so. [*Laughter*]

BP: Very impressive.

SL: He won your younger brothers over immediately. [*Laughter*]

BP: Yeah.

[01:51:11] SL: So tell me how you and David met.

BP: Well, as he has often said—he—that he saw me walking down the street. He was at the student union sitting on the terrace. I guess I was walking home. [*Laughs*] But we actually met at his fraternity house. He was president. He was greeting everybody at the door. And I had a date with one of his brothers, a freshman, who—back then you used to invite girls to go to a game weeks in advance. Weeks. [*SL laughs*] It was insane, but anyway, by the time the date rolled around, the boy had already fallen in love with someone else. And he was—he spent the whole game looking down the row at her [*laughs*], and I just felt like a dog, you know [*laughter*] for being there. And so we went to the fraternity house, an SAE house. David was at the door, and that's when I met him.

[01:52:22] SL: Well, did you sense upon meeting him—nothing?

BP: No, no.

SL: No?

BP: Not really. Just another older—he seemed older, and he was. He had a lost a year of school because he was ill.

SL: That—yes.

BP: And so he—otherwise, we would never have met. He would've graduated before I got there. But he was very nice, very handsome, of course, and I guess what you would call a big man on campus. But . . .

[01:52:56] SL: So it wasn't long before he went up and met Mom and Dad and . . .

BP: Well, the next day he called to ask me to go to the Key Club banquet, which was one of the things that—I think some of the scholars were Key Club members. And so I went—we did that. And then it was another public event. The first few dates were not one on one, particularly, but . . .

SL: A social . . .

BP: Social . . .

SL: . . . gathering.

BP: Yes. Yep. Think there's a picture that I brought of us at the SAE formal dance and maybe an SAE Friday night party or some such thing as that. [*Laughs*] But he did not drink or smoke, which was unusual for a college . . .

SL: An upperclassman.

BP: . . . boy. And so those kinds of events were really something that I think he did because he thought he should, because I think he was the president of SAE. So anyway—but he never seemed like a fraternity boy. He never was frivolous or a party person or any of that. He was pretty serious. And I think, looking back, probably because he had

had such a close call—they had diagnosed him as dying, you know. And they didn't know what was wrong with him, but they knew that he was . . .

SL: Seriously ill.

BP: . . . seriously ill and he, you know, he took a year off from school and then he, of course, he had this experimental surgery on his kidney, which was not done at that time. Now I think it's standard procedure. But he had a very hard year of convalescing, and he may have lost fifty pounds. I mean, he was—so I think, you know, anytime you come up against something like that, it changes you and makes you really focus on what's important. That—what you want to do. I think the same thing happened to Mark, see.

SL: Yeah, that's interesting.

[01:55:24] BP: And in a way, the same thing happened to me. 'Cause when I was ill, I had a heart stoppage, and it does change you. I think in a lot of ways it makes you fearless because you think, "Well, this can happen in a New York minute."

SL: Yeah.

BP: "A second."

SL: Yeah.

BP: And it's gone. So you better get, you know . . .

SL: Get with it.

BP: Yeah. No, don't waste time in anger or unhappiness or all the things that are such time wasters. I think it does change you.

[01:56:03] SL: So how many—how long did you and David date before he proposed?

BP: We dated probably six months, probably. I think we started dating in September. Maybe in the spring the following year he proposed. And I had gone to visit in El Dorado—I mean, Camden, his home town. I'd never been south before. And we went out on the Ouachita River, and the cook had fixed us a picnic lunch. We were in a boat, and we pulled up to a sand bar [*SL laughs*], got out, had our lunch, and he proposed. [*Laughter*] But his mother was in South America being a missionary. She was a missionary at—later in life, when she was sixty, sixty-five. And so I had not met her yet, and you know, it was all very formal and proper.

[01:57:21] SL: Now, I guess I could ask David this, but didn't she start doin' the missionary work after David's father passed?

BP: Yes. Oh yeah. Mr. Pryor, Edgar, died when David was seventeen.

SL: Right.

BP: And he was fifty-one, and so Susie was a widower—widow—the rest of her life. She never remarried. And she was a very spiritual person and a great blessing to me. She was wonderful. She embraced me, and we were best friends. She was just fabulous. Really loved her. And always on my side. Wouldn't matter what [*laughter*] the issue was [*laughter*], which you appreciate . . .

SL: Yeah, sure.

BP: . . . from a mother-in-law.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

BP: But she was fabulous, and we, you know, were very close, and she was very, very good to me. So . . .

[01:58:29] SL: So y'all married in Fayetteville . . .

BP: We did.

SL: . . . at Central Methodist Church.

BP: We did. Mh-hmm.

SL: Now Central United Methodist Church.

BP: Exactly.

SL: And who was the pastor?

BP: Brother Dykes. I remember.

BP: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: I, of course, was not there.

BP: You had . . .

SL: Tonsillitis . . .

BP: Tonsillitis.

SL: . . or something. I was the . . .

BP: You were to be the ring bearer . . .

SL: I know. [*Laughs*]

BP: . . . and didn't make it. So would you have been five, I think.

SL: I think. Yeah.

BP: Yeah. About that.

[01:59:03] SL: Well now, did Susie Pryor come to the wedding?

BP: Oh, yes.

SL: She was there.

BP: I brought all the wedding pictures with me.

SL: Okay, good.

BP: So yes. Of course . . .

SL: 'Cause I . . .

BP: . . . Susie was . . .

SL: I guess—mess—I missed all that, I guess.

BP: Susie was there, and you know, it was a nice wedding. It was on Thanksgiving Day in the morning, and we had a perfect Fayetteville day. And the bridesmaids wore gold, brown, and rust velvet dresses . . .

SL: Wow.

BP: . . . and you know, it was fall, so they had mums. Mother made my dress. It was lace. And interestingly enough, it looks exactly like the new person that just married William—Kate. Kate Middleton's . . .

SL: Oh, Kate's wedding.

BP: . . . dress—identical.

SL: Unbelievable.

BP: I couldn't believe it when I saw her dress. Exactly like it. Yeah. So Mother made the dress, and anyway, it was a beautiful wedding at ten o'clock in the morning. Then we all went up to Mother's, just the bridal party. We stood at the back of the church and shook everybody's hand. But the bridal party went to Mother's. Course, she'd made this elaborate Thanksgiving dinner [*laughs*], which we

didn't really eat. But . . .

SL: Right.

BP: . . . we went ahead and went on our wedding trip, which was to New Orleans. So . . .

SL: New Orleans.

BP: Mh-hmm. That's where—we used to go to New Orleans every year on our anniversary for about eighteen years, and then life . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . got so busy we . . .

SL: Right.

BP: Yeah. We love New Orleans.

[02:00:52] SL: So did you all have a plan? I mean, David had graduated—had gotten a B.A. Is that right?

BP: He did have one, and ironically, he couldn't find a job. Apparently there were not too many—too much demand for political science majors. [*Laughs*] So he decided that he would—he'd always been interested in writing and newspapers, so he decided that he would start his own newspaper. A weekly newspaper in Camden, Arkansas, called *The Ouachita Citizen*. And so that's what he did, and I soon joined him in the big adventure, and we had a great time running a little newspaper.

[02:01:44] SL: How long did y'all do that?

BP: We did that for four years. It was the hardest work I've ever done. After that, nothing's hard. [*SL laughs*] But getting that newspaper

out—it was David and me and sometimes his mother. But we wrote every word. David sold all the ads. He was the photographer. I mean, it was pretty much a three-person operation. Every once in a while we might scrape up enough money to hire [*laughs*] someone to help us, but it was . . .

SL: Well, you had a guy that ran the Linotype . . .

BP: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . machine.

BP: We did have—we had the printers. We had all the printers there, and we had a flatbed press that was actually—printed Bibles in Ohio. And it was—of course, it took up a whole building. That's the way it used to be. But that was the clearest, cleanest newspaper. The type on it was beautiful and back in the day—now everything's offset, but back in the day you did—we had three Linotype machines, and they set every piece of type, and I could—in the old days I used to justify a page, which would—you know, you'd slip in all of the little pieces of metal to keep it tight when it was put on the press. And I was also the circulation person, and so I—once we printed the paper, then we mailed it out. We had a mailing machine that you stamped and all the papers passed through. That was one of my jobs. But it took probably Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday all night, every night. It printed once a week. [*Laughs*] That's so—yes, it was hard work. Hard work, but fun.

[02:03:45] SL: Also, the [*BP laughs*] Palmer family . . .

BP: They . . .

SL: . . . had several newspapers.

BP: They had the newspapers in south Arkansas. They probably had six. They were a daily. And they were rich, you know, and they had radio stations, and they had a lot of things. But they resented our paper a lot, even though we couldn't have—it would've been like a mosquito on an elephant. But nevertheless [*laughs*], I don't think they appreciated our effort at all. They were very unhappy about having any [*laughs*] competition. I don't know. I guess it . . .

[02:04:26] SL: Well, it was the ads.

BP: I guess that's what . . .

SL: It was the advertising account . . .

BP: But our ads were so tiny and basically, you know, just enough to keep bread on the table. And we were also Presbyterians, and the Hussman family went to our church. And I—and David and I taught Walter Hussman in Sunday school. He now owns the . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . *Democrat-Gazette* along with many other things. So . . .

SL: Yeah, he . . .

BP: With—yeah.

SL: He mentioned that y'all were his Sunday school teachers.

BP: Yeah, we were. [*Laughs*]

[02:05:02] SL: Camden is a—was a fascinating town, wasn't it?

BP: It was very fascinating and it . . .

SL: Ouachita River runs right through it.

BP: Right, and it was the years of Faubus. Those were the Faubus years, and David eventually ran for the legislature, and he was a very fierce opponent of Faubus and—you know, editorially and every other way—and deeply resented in part of the town that—you know, it was all about segregation, once again, you know. Central High had—was occurring and all of that. So you know, it was—those were exciting times. Very exciting times and . . .

[02:05:54] SL: Well, while y'all were in the later years of running that newspaper, David decided he would run for . . .

BP: He did.

SL: . . . state legislature.

BP: He did. Mh-hmm.

SL: Right? And so y'all decided to sell the paper.

BP: We did. Mh-hmm.

SL: And if I get this right, I think it was the folks that had owned the print shop or . . .

BP: They bought the paper.

SL: . . . a couple of brothers that felt like they could make it go and . . .

BP: And of course, it collapsed after maybe a year 'cause, man, it was full time.

[02:06:30] SL: So it—well, and it—they probably didn't have that column that you ran. [*BP laughs*] What was that called?

BP: What I—I think that was a filler. It was called "Something Good."

SL: And tell me what "Something Good" was about.

BP: It was about a person in Camden or in the county, Ouachita, that had done something nice for someone or, you know, some heroic . . .

SL: So it was good news.

BP: Yes, it was . . .

SL: Something good.

BP: . . . good news. That's the way to look at it. It was all about good news. And s . . .

SL: And you don't get much of that anymore. [*BP laughs*] Or you have to really search for it.

BP: Yes. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Yeah.

[02:07:05] SL: And then, of course, I guess they missed David's commentary, too.

BP: [*Laughs*] Probably.

SL: Didn't have the editorials. The firebrand . . .

BP: That's right.

SL: . . . editorials.

BP: That's right. Probably.

[02:07:15] SL: So you guys—David announces shortly after the paper's sold, and you all are on the campaign trail.

BP: We are, and we loved the campaign. We went to every store and door [*laughs*] in Ouachita County. And that's the way you did it then. You

walked door to door or store to store. You would go to all the little communities.

[02:07:44] SL: But you had a third person campaigning with you.

BP: Absolutely. Dee Pryor, the wonderful and only Dee Pryor.

SL: Your first child.

BP: Yes.

SL: So paint the picture for me.

BP: Well, when he was little, we carried him in a laundry basket [*SL laughs*] before the days of car seats and other fine things. So he grew up going to pie suppers and dinners on the ground and singin's and, you know, every—many times when we would go into the African American churches, Dee would be front and center because he was so cute. [*SL laughs*] And we, you know, would sit on the front row with Dee. And yes, we campaigned together. And then when he could walk, we campaigned together. Poor guys. Poor little children of mine. They've—they grew up campaigning all their lives. They really did. [*Laughs*]

[02:08:45] SL: Well, you know, it's interesting to me [*BP laughs*] that David Jr., Dee, got so—became so well versed in event management . . .

BP: Oh, he is . . .

SL: . . . and designing events . . .

BP: He is absolutely the best.

SL: And I can't tell you, every event . . .

BP: We call him "Mr. Crowd."

SL: . . . I've ever been to . . .

BP: Mr. C. He can get up a crowd, now.

SL: He can.

BP: He can build a crowd. He's good at it, and he's good at paying attention to absolutely everybody. I think the secret to his Washington time is that he is so nice to staff people and people that do a lot of the work. He keeps up with the—it's—they're not little people, but that's who he deals with mostly. And I know he knows the other guys, too, the other people, but he's good at it.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Very good at it.

[02:09:46] SL: Yeah, well [*BP laughs*], he—we would say he comes by it honest.

BP: I think he must've—it must've been osmosis, right? [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah, yeah. It's in that laundry basket.

BP: But I'm afraid we drug 'em all around to all the campaigns. All of 'em. So you know, there they are.

SL: Well, they're magnificent children.

BP: [*Laughs*] Well, thank you.

[02:10:08] SL: So you and David are going to every door.

BP: Every store.

SL: And Dee Jr.

BP: Yeah.

SL: You're carrying your newborn with you everywhere you go.

BP: Exactly. [*Laughs*]

SL: And you're up against a Faubus guy. A . . .

BP: Yes, and he was also in office.

SL: Yeah.

BP: He was—he had been, I think . . .

SL: Ten years or so.

BP: Yeah, elected two or three times. But you know, there we were. And that—David calls it retail politics, but that's—we went, you know, everywhere together. And then when we were—when David was actually in the legislature, Dee Pryor went with us. For that amount of time we lived in a hotel, you know. [*Laughs*] And everybody loved—all the people that worked in the hotel [*laughs*] loved Dee, you know, and eventually Mark. So we—you know, there was no—they would go and warm the bottles and [*laughter*] things like that. It was really pretty great, now that I think about it. Yeah.

[02:11:23] SL: So this first campaign you guys win.

BP: We win.

SL: But you were pretty much considered underdogs. I mean . . .

BP: Yeah, definitely. Mh-hmm.

SL: I mean . . .

BP: Always underdogs.

SL: Back then, were there polls to pay attention to?

BP: Golly.

SL: I can't remember . . .

BP: There was a wonderful pollster—he's no longer with us. In fact, he died early—Jim Ranchino, out of Arkadelphia. And gosh, he was so good, but we couldn't afford a poll . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . in our day. But he would poll statewide, but our little county—then later, of course, David ran for the Congress, which encompassed twenty counties. And, once again, no money, just sheer effort and, I will say this, volunteers. If we hadn't had the volunteers—and I will say further—women. They're the best. They are the best. We wouldn't ever have won anything without women 'cause they came; they stayed.

[02:12:38] SL: Well, I can remember the congressional race, the first congressional [*BP laughs*] race.

BP: You didn't have to go door to door, did you? [*Laughs*]

SL: No, but I . . .

BP: You probably had to put the bumper stickers on. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah, we stood out in the middle of the street.

BP: We were big with bumper stickers and yard signs.

SL: Yeah, I . . .

BP: It was our big [*laughs*] . . .

SL: I remember handing Pryor—David Pryor propaganda to the Arnold family [*BP laughs*] at a peewee baseball game [*laughter*] one night.

BP: Yes.

SL: I didn't know who they were, but [*BP laughs*] it was pointed out to me later.

BP: Yeah, we did all of that. Every ball game, every whatever. [*Laughter*]  
It went on and on, I'm afraid. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, so—what was it that you think—I mean, I've always heard that you guys were really a great team.

[02:13:35] BP: We were, and I, once again, give David credit because most people running for office in that time—of course, all men ran for office. Rarely did a woman run. He wanted us to be a team. He wanted me to be with him. And so we went together as a team, and many times I was relegated to the back seat in the delta. They just, you know—and I would have to go to the house and sit on the porch in some areas. But he insisted that we work as a team, and he included me in everything. So many smoke-filled rooms. Those really existed back in the day, and I was there with—for everything. Of course, also, I was the one that opened up so many of the campaign offices. I swept 'em out, I cleaned the bathrooms, I got the people in there. I mean, you know, it was a team effort, though, always, and it was his idea. But I actually loved the campaign. What I had to learn later was that only one person sits in the seat. [*SL laughs*] See, that's quite a difference.

SL: Yeah.

[02:14:56] BP: You work together. You work together. You work together. You win. And then only one person is in the seat. And it

was a shock in the beginning. Now, of course, I'm used to it. But that was a lesson also. So that's why I think I loved the campaigns the most because the serving part—even though when we moved to Washington, I did a whole lot of constituent tours. I took everybody to the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson—I mean, you know, I did the whole tour-guide thing and had many people to dinner and all of that. So we still were a team, but it's different.

[02:15:46] SL: In those early days, politics was different, though, wasn't it? I mean . . .

BP: It was different. Mh-hmm.

SL: I mean, yeah, there were smoke-filled rooms. I think there's still smoke-filled rooms.

BP: There may be.

SL: They might—maybe not as smoky, but . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . there . . .

BP: And then there were so few regulations on money. It doesn't—it sounds funny, but more people when you would go around—if I were in an office or a bank, they would just come and slip money in my pocket. It could be five dollars. It could be a hundred dollars, but you didn't have to account for it. You know, I mean that's just the . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . way it was. But I think overall, the most important thing about

David, and maybe about everyone that's a true public servant, is that one person can make the difference, you know.

SL: Yeah.

[02:16:39] BP: I don't know that people believe that anymore. I know John F. Kennedy—that was one of his big things, and I think it's true. I think that one person like David, like whoever, can make a difference. And as long as you believe that, I don't think anything's too hard or too long or you know, not possible. And I wish that we would all believe that again.

SL: Well, you know, I think David felt from the beginning that he could make a difference.

BP: I do think so.

SL: And you know . . .

BP: I think he wanted to make it better. Not just for him, but for . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . our state. Our state is a—was a poor state at that point. We had a poor district, but wonderful hard-working people. And so, you know, to make it better—to make it better. That was all.

[02:17:40] SL: I know that he was pretty much running on anti-Faubus . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . anti-cronyism, anti all that stuff. I just wonder—I mean, I know that y'all had resistance from many quarters 'cause his reach was phenomenal. But at the same time, I just—I don't remember anything

ever getting as ugly as it gets now or . . .

BP: No, I don't think so.

SL: There was some kind of—I don't know.

[02:18:14] BP: I think people still believed that if you differed with somebody, you had that right to differ. Now, if you differ with somebody, then they think they have to kill you or—you know, I mean, it's so brutal, and they think possibly that's the only answer. We all know it's not.

SL: Yeah.

BP: There are many answers, but unless we find 'em together, it's never gonna work. I—I'm—you know, it's been a terrible transition that we're seeing now—to what we're seeing now. It's destructive. And you spend your whole life doing this, and [*laughs*] at the end of it, what do you see? People are destroying each other. It's incredible. It's, you know, it's un-American, but maybe people have forgotten. I don't know.

SL: Well, when . . .

BP: It's very disturbing.

[02:19:19] SL: When y'all got to the—so when you get elected to the state, when he gets elected to the state legislature, do you move to Little Rock?

BP: No, no.

SL: You stay in Camden?

BP: We can't afford that. Well, he did it so funny. Backward, really. He

was in for one term, and he decided we needed a new constitution. He went all over the state preaching the need for a new constitution. Then the second term, he went back to law school. He was in law school when he was serving in the House. And I mean, you know, it was . . .

SL: At the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

[02:20:02] BP: Yes, he was here. Yeah. And we might move to a hotel or something with the children. You know, in those days you were there for sixty days, so we might do part-time in Little Rock at the capital. But we were, you know, on a shoestring. We've always been on a shoestring. We've always lived on our salary. We learned to do things, you know, a lot with nothing. And I think one year we did have an apartment, and it was—I guess it would be what is now the Quapaw Quarter, which he made, when he was governor, he made that into a historic district. But it was pretty iffy for a while, and we lived there. And when I told someone from the Heights that that was where we were living and that we had a nanny helping us, and she said, "Well, is she your next-door neighbor?" [*Laughs*] Which I thought was sort of snooty, you know.

SL: Yeah.

BP: But you know, we've always lived on what we made, and when David was governor, it was ten thousand a year.

SL: Yes.

[02:21:22] BP: And [*laughter*]—yes. And then, you know, we've

always—and actually, Mother—when we needed a winter coat or shoes or something, that's—we got 'em from the church rummage sales. So I've always been used to, you know, making a little bit go a long way. And when we were governor, I just bought my clothes at a second-hand store. I had one dress—one long dress and one short dress and that—you know, it was enough. So [*laughs*] it's been fun. [*Laughter*] It has been fun.

[02:22:06] SL: Well, so when the—I mean, you jump up into a different league when you go from one county election to a twenty-county election.

BP: Yes, and the fourth district—wonderful district. We love those counties, and we love those people. Mostly, you know, in the delta it would be the farmers, and in and around Camden it would be the timber people. But there were also a lot of industrial, like Cooper Tire and all of these very—and at that time it was a terrible thing, but there were a lot of shirt factories and people where very poor women were put in this one big room sewing . . .

SL: Sweat shops.

BP: Yeah, mh-hmm. A lot of those. There were all kinds of little bitty industries throughout that area because, once again, it was a poor area, so people worked. They worked hard. And we were very—identified very strongly with some of the unions because they were our people. And that, once again, was something that was basically unacceptable. I mean, in some circles.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Certainly not in ours, but . . .

[02:23:24] SL: Well, the race for Congress was because Oren Harris was retiring?

BP: Mh-hmm.

SL: So you weren't having to run against an incumbent.

BP: No, but there were five people that ran for that office.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Yeah, it was a tough race.

SL: So—and back then, the primary . . .

BP: Tough race.

SL: The primary was where you won or lost . . .

BP: The primary was the . . .

SL: . . . the race.

BP: It was the election.

SL: Yeah.

BP: There were no Republicans at that point. You might've had a token Republican, but it was of no consequence, really. Yeah. Tough race.

[02:23:56] SL: So you had Mark and Dee with you during that race.

BP: Yes, and Scott was born when we lived in Camden, right before David won that race and we went to Washington. When we moved to Washington, Scott was seven months old.

SL: [*Laughs*] Wow.

BP: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] So we did have three children by then.

[02:24:22] SL: Well, what did you think of Washington, DC?

BP: I loved it. Loved it. Thought it was beautiful and wonderful. I went to a art museum for the first time. And you know [*laughter*], it's wonderful. And a much simpler town then. It was a Southern town, really. But you felt like you were watching history being made. Every day you were witnessing all of these great things. Lyndon Johnson was president. Just think of all the civil rights legislation that he worked so hard for—that everybody did. There was, you know, Resurrection City. There were the riots after Martin Luther King was murdered. George Wallace was shot. Robert Kennedy was killed, to say nothing of the Vietnam War, which was so, so sad every day. And we drove—we lived in Virginia, and every day when we drove by Arlington Cemetery, new crosses every day. Just on and on and on. We lost so many people during that war, and a lot of 'em were Arkansas people. Arkansas boys.

[02:25:48] SL: You had Johnson, but you also had Fulbright, McClellan, Wilbur Mills.

BP: Mh-hmm. Well, now in the—yes, we did. Those were the two senators. Wilbur Mills was in the House. Jim Trimble . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: Yes, there were some great congressmen during that time, and they had all been there long enough to be legendary. And most of 'em chairmen of committees.

SL: That's right.

BP: So it was quite wonderful.

SL: Seniority. There was . . .

BP: Yeah, Arkansas . . .

SL: . . . a lot of seniority.

BP: . . . had a great reputation in Washington. Very well-respected people were in office at that point. So rich. Rich.

[02:26:34] SL: When did David start the nursing home stuff?

BP: That was when he was in the House. And he disguised himself as an orderly. He kept getting letters from his mother, who had an aunt [laughs], Aunt Eva . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . in a nursing home. And she was saying that the conditions are just terrible. You've got to do something about this. So anyway, he disguised himself, and at that point he was probably thirty-one or -two, maybe, and went as an orderly and worked in the nursing homes around in the district and in Maryland and Virginia. And he did see terrible things. So then he started campaigning for a House committee on aging. And of course, the old bulls didn't want a new committee. They didn't think that was right. They just didn't want to do it. So he got a trailer and put it on—right off of the capital grounds, and it was the Trailer House Committee . . .

SL: How did . . .

BP: . . . on Aging. [Laughs]

SL: How did he get that done? Or maybe I . . .

BP: He just . . .

SL: . . . should ask . . .

BP: . . . did it.

SL: . . . him that, but . . .

BP: He just did it. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[02:27:52] BP: He did it, and he had volunteers from all over the country. Our mail—we had sacks and sacks and sacks of mails. And we had all these young people rush in and volunteer to help in the summertime. I mean, it was pretty impressive, really, what he did. And then, of course, he decided to run for the Senate a little after that, and that was a brutal race and a—and one he lost—the only one he's ever lost. And . . .

[02:28:24] SL: When—now, you had a medical emergency during one of these campaigns.

BP: Oh yes, that was when David was in the House.

SL: Was that the second run or . . .

BP: It would've been the third term, I believe.

SL: Third term.

BP: Yes. And I was—I had to have an emergency hysterectomy. It was just one of those things. I did not realize I was terribly anemic, and you know, my whole health had not been good. And you know, you just don't think about it. You just keep going on and on, and so then I had an emergency hysterectomy. And right after that—twenty-four

hours after surgery—and Dad was sitting in the room. He had—they had come up. He was sitting with me. And I kept saying to him, "I can't breathe. I can't breathe." And he would take the flowers out of the room. There were a lot of flowers in there. And I said, "No, no, I can't breathe." And with that, my heart stopped. And apparently I had thrown a blood clot to the lungs, and that's what happened. And so, fortunately—who knows? My doctor was in the hospital on Thanksgiving morning.

[02:29:52] SL: This is your anniversary. [*Laughs*]

BP: Yeah. Mh-hmm. He was there. He heard the blue—code blue. Came rushing in and just really, I think, wouldn't let me die. He just [*laughs*], you know, started pounding the chest and the shot and the whole nine yards. But I did—I was—I don't know how long it was that I was unconscious. A few minutes, probably. I'm not sure. But I did have damage to one of my legs, and I had memory loss. I've never, for instance, been [*laughs*] able to add much [*laughs*] since. And I used to memorize poetry, and I used to write all the time. And I've never been able to pick that back up. Just, you know, just short—couldn't do it. I don't know what happened. But anyway, I survived. I was in the hospital probably seven or eight weeks and then, you know, came out.

[02:31:00] SL: Did you experience anything [*BP laughs*] while they were working on you?

BP: I did. I had an out-of-body experience, which . . .

SL: Are you comfortable talking about that?

BP: I'm sure—oh no, that's fine. I'll tell you what happens. You—when you have that experience—or at least my experience was that you were conscious of everything that was happening with the body, but you didn't feel anything. For instance, one of the nurses knocked over the glucose thing, and it hit me in the head, but . . .

SL: The stand that . . .

[02:31:40] BP: Yeah, uh-huh. And everybody was real excited, but what happens, in my case, was that you rise above—literally leave the body and rise above. You're looking back down. You see it all, but you don't care and, you know, and you feel really good. [*Laughs*] I just want to assure everybody [*laughter*] not to be afraid. There's nothing to be afraid of, for sure. And then you—in my case, you leave the body. You rise up. You look down. You see it all. And then, suddenly, you're in a really—I would think long tunnel of some kind, and at the very end of that tunnel there's a beautiful light glowing. And you feel so wonderful. You've never felt better in your life. You feel at peace. You know that everything's good and right. [*Laughs*] And euphoria—you know, you feel so good. And then you reach the light, and in my case I knew that my brother, Porter, was there, who had died a year earlier and—from leukemia. And I was just getting ready to turn around and greet him. I know he was there—when all of a sudden I was pulled back into the body in horrific pain. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

BP: Horrific pain. And after that, you know, I was, I guess, in intensive care for a long time. But it was a really exhilarating, fantastic experience. And I wouldn't take anything for it, in spite [*laughs*] of all of it. I would—I think it's very reassuring to know that I think there is life after death. I think that it's going to be fa—I think it's a paradise. I don't know what it looks like, but I think the feeling in general is very, very good. So [*laughs*] . . .

SL: That's really good to hear. [*Laughter*] I'm ready to go. [*Laughter*] I'll be ready.

BP: I'm not worried about it. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's good news. [*BP laughs*] That's really good.

BP: And in another way, I'm not worried about it for other people. See, I do think it is a blessing when the time is right. My time—it was not my time.

SL: Yeah, you had a lot more work to do.

BP: I did. Golly! [*Laughter*]

SL: You were just gettin' started. [*Laughter*]

[02:34:27] BP: But anyway, my brother was thirty-three when he died. I was thirty-three during that time, and then when Mark had his cancer, which was terminal they say, he was thirty-three. So I was pretty worried about Mark. [*Laughs*] I hope he ?meant? . . .

SL: Well, that's the mother in you.

BP: Yes, yes.

[02:34:48] SL: But you know, speaking of brother Porter . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . and toward the end of his life—I remember us . . .

BP: He was fabulous.

SL: He was fabulous, but I—and we can talk about him, but one of the greatest memories I have is going to St. Louis to hear The Band and . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . Bob Dylan.

BP: Yeah, we were there.

SL: And Porter and . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . you and I were there.

BP: I was there. Mh-hmm.

SL: And Gary.

BP: Yes.

[02:35:11] SL: And it was just a wonderful, wonderful . . .

BP: It was wonderful.

SL: . . . experience.

BP: Wonderful experience. Wonderful. He had agreed to be an experimental patient because they gave him six months, ordinarily. They extended his life another six months, but he was valiant throughout. You know, throughout the whole thing, his attitude was unbelievable and an example to all of us, I think. I remember we—he called each one of us in at the end to tell us something. Do you

remember? Do you remember what he told you?

SL: I don't.

BP: You don't?

SL: You know, I was at—where was I? I was at Boys State . . .

BP: Oh, you were? Yeah.

SL: . . . when Porter got the news of leukemia. But I don't remember.

Did he speak to the kids—to me? I mean, I was such . . .

BP: I don't . . .

SL: I was . . .

BP: I know he called me in, and he really had pretty much lost the ability to talk. But he said, "You're rare." [*Laughter*] Wasn't that cool?

SL: Yeah.

BP: And I have carried that. "You're rare." And it makes me feel really good [*laughs*] that he thought so. [*Laughs*] But I think he said parting words to just about everybody.

[02:36:37] SL: I—you know, I don't remember being a part of that and that you would think I would . . .

BP: "You're rare," he said.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

BP: Wasn't that good? [*Laughs*]

[02:36:45] SL: That's very good. That's very good. I . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: He and I used to watch *Road Runner* and [*laughter*] Wile E. Coyote and the . . .

BP: Yes, all the good . . .

SL: He loved that.

BP: . . . stuff.

SL: He loved those Saturday morning cartoons.

BP: All the good stuff. Yes. Yeah.

[02:37:03] SL: Is there anything else you want to say about Porter?

BP: Well, I was blessed to have him as a brother, and I really think that my brothers—each one—David, of course, was the most wonderful person. But they're all pretty much like shining stars.

SL: Yeah. Yeah, miss 'em.

BP: [*Laughs*] So lucky.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Lucky me.

SL: Yeah, yeah. Okay, so . . .

TM: Scott, you want to take a break? It's been a little bit over an hour.

SL: Okay. Yeah, let's take a break.

[Tape stopped]

[02:37:49] SL: All right, so we are in our third session now and you—y'all lose the Senate race . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . against McClellan.

BP: Yes, what a race that was.

SL: And what a race that was.

BP: Yes, it was a powerful, unbelievable race. And it was very close, and it

was heartbreaking that we lost. But then I really think—I believe this, that you learn so much in defeat. You learn a lot, and I think it was a great lesson. So it better prepared us for other—the rest [*laughs*] of his career, I think. So it was . . .

SL: So . . .

BP: At the time it was just almost unbearable. But you know, looking back, I see all the good that was in it.

SL: Well, that's a very healthy place to be.

BP: [*Laughs*] Well [*laughter*], sounds good. [*Laughter*]

[02:39:02] SL: Yeah, yeah. Well, now what about your—I mean, you know, you touched on this—two in the campaign, two to win, one person has the seat.

BP: Yes. [*Laughs*]

SL: So what is it that you're doing? What—I mean, once you get—you've got children now.

BP: Yes.

SL: All right. So are you kind of a stay-at-home mom? Are you raising the kids, or are there always these . . .

BP: I think there's . . .

SL: . . . peripheral things going on?

BP: I think there's a lot of peripheral things going on that—I think it's an absolute miracle that our children, our sons, have turned out so well because I think we were absent a lot. Maybe we were together with them, and maybe they were with us, but I think our lives have been so

busy meeting all of the things—demands, whatever—that we put forth for ourselves. And the boys, as you know, are just wonderful people. All three of 'em are fabulous people. They're good dads. They're good husbands. You know, it's really—I'm—more than anything, I'm grateful for the way that they are. And I don't think that I had much to do with it 'cause I think I was absent some of the time, maybe a lot of the time. [*Laughs*] Maybe that was good. [*Laughter*] I don't know.

SL: Could be the difference. [*Laughter*]

BP: Maybe.

SL: Could be. [*BP laughs*] Well, they all got to know [*BP laughs*] Susie, right?

BP: Yes, and she was . . .

SL: And they all got to know Bruce and Rosa Lee.

BP: Rosa Lee. Oh, yeah.

[02:41:51] SL: So they . . .

BP: They were great influences on their life, too. Yes, they had—they were blessed with good grandparents.

SL: And of course, great aunts and uncles [*BP laughs*] as well. [*Laughter*]  
But . . .

BP: Needless to say.

SL: Needless to say. [*BP laughs*] Well, so what kind of stuff did you get dragged into when you got to DC that kept you away from the kids? I mean . . .

BP: Well, for one thing, every constituent that came [*laughs*] to Washington—maybe that was the only trip they would have. You know, that was their big trip. So we liked to do as much for people that came to Washington as we could. And you know, a lot of it was like a tour guide, taking them here and there to look at things—the Capitol. Having them to lunch if they were—you know, maybe to dinner. It was—and we did a lot of entertaining—just, you know, having people over—going out. We tried to take advantage of every opportunity because it was a historic time. And one of the things I forgot to mention a while ago when we were talking about Resurrection City was that they burned 14th Street after Martin Luther King was killed, and we were under martial law, you know, in Washington, in the nation's [*laughs*] capital.

SL: Wow!

BP: Yeah, so very exciting times and difficult times as well for the country. So we lived, you know, a real different life. Every day seemed different, you know. So . . .

[02:42:43] SL: And there wasn't really a whole lot of difference when you would come back to Arkansas 'cause you would have to be meeting with folks . . .

BP: Same thing.

SL: . . . and campaigning and . . .

BP: Absolutely. Same thing. Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . keeping in touch with . . .

BP: Now, David did travel much more than I did when he was in the Congress—in the House because we had three children and a dog. [Laughs] And I came back—we usually tried to come back for Christmas and the summer, the boys and I. And we would drive. But he came home almost every weekend. He would fly back and forth. You just had to do it as a congressman because you're—you run every two years, so you really never stop . . .

SL: Quit running.

BP: . . . campaigning. But you know, the boys and I would drive back, and usually we would spend the summer in Hot Springs. We had an old house there on the lake. And the boys would get jobs, you know, and we would be around. It was fun. Really fun. We were glad to be home. For some reason, we never thought of ourselves as being from Washington. We never thought of ourselves as being anything but from Arkansas, so Arkansas was always our home, and we loved coming back. And when David retired from the Senate, there was no question that we wouldn't move right back.

SL: Right.

BP: It was just—that—this is home for us, so . . .

[02:44:22] SL: Well now, before—you know, you—so the McClellan race was very, very close.

BP: Yes.

SL: An exhausting experience.

BP: Yes.

SL: So there's a two-year period where I think David would say he felt like a fish out of water.

BP: Yes. Well, he said after the McClellan race that he would never run for political office again. [*Laughter*] And I said, "Okay." And—but then, you know, about a year later I pick up the paper one day, and he's running [*laughs*] for governor. [*Laughter*] So that didn't last very long, did it?

SL: No. [*BP laughs*]

BP: And he loved being governor. I think it's much closer to the people. And he enjoyed that. And it was great living in the mansion. My goodness, now it's twice as big, but at the time it was a mansion to us. And having people cook for you and wait on you and drive you places. I mean, it was a fantastic experience, and we actually loved every minute of it.

[02:45:34] SL: Well, what were your main duties as far as being First Lady of Arkansas?

BP: Well, one of the things that I started getting very interested in because at that point you can, you know, do things like the arts. Very interested in the Arts Center and helping it along. And there was a group called rep—the rep thee—the Repertory Theater, which really kind of met on a little ol' tiny store in Cavanaugh—on Cavanaugh Street in the Hillcrest area. And it became a real, you know, group and—a drama group. And I was there with that early. And I took a great interest in Arkansas art, artists and art. And it was fun to

promote those kinds of things. During that time, also, I produced a movie. I worked on a movie, and then I produced one. And that was an incredible experience.

[02:46:39] SL: So how did you get hooked into working on a movie?  
How'd that happen?

BP: Well, Charles Pierce was a friend of ours. He was an old filmmaker. He wasn't old, he was young. And he had written or had a movie—oh, gosh—the creature of . . .

SL: *Swamp Thing* or creature from the black . . .

BP: Yeah, Boggy Creek. The Boggy Creek monster.

SL: Yeah.

BP: And it had just made millions. It had cost about \$200,000. [*Laughs*]  
It was the beginning of all those, you know, scary movies.

SL: Creature movies.

BP: And he—yeah, the creature from Foggy Bottom or—anyway . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . I can't remember exactly now. And I, myself, was very, very tired of public life, so I decided to take some time off, and I went to work for Charles Pierce as a script girl. [*Laughs*] I had no experience, but anyway, I learned fast enough. And then it looked so easy. It just looked so easy. That was a great misconception on my part. So I decided to go ahead and make a movie because I thought, you know, that I knew everything [*SL laughs*—blah, blah—and boy was that—you know, that was really—it was a great adventure, but it was also

very hard. And so I did that, and the movie was not a success, which was disappointing. But I did have the experience. And so I decided maybe politics looked pretty good after all [*laughs*] and came back and decided that I'd stick with it. So that's where we were.

[02:48:22] SL: So I guess the—and making movies are so expensive.

BP: Well, this one was not. This was a B movie. Shot it on the Buffalo River. It was a witchcraft western, of all the dumb things that anything could be.

SL: Well, I mean, that's . . .

BP: Well, I mean, you know, it was kind of in the genre that Charlie had such success in. But anyway, like everything else, you know—learned a lot. And I think half of learning is learning what you will do and learning what you will not do. And for me, the movie business is—it's—takes too big a toll. And in Arkansas, you know, your word is your bond. In Hollywood [*laughs*] they don't care. [*Laughter*] And you can't do anything on a hand . . .

SL: New day. New word.

BP: You can't do anything on a handshake. It's all, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . pretty rough stuff. Plus, of all the producers—this was during the period of the super eight, the big studio period. I was probably—as far as I know—the only woman producer in the country or one of the only ones. And then they didn't—it didn't work. You know, it just—women? No. They took advantage—all these things. And so it was

quite an experience, but . . .

[02:49:53] SL: Well, the actors have their own agendas, too, right?

They . . .

BP: Yes, they do. They do.

SL: And . . .

BP: And . . .

SL: . . . putting an ensemble together is tricky.

BP: Tricky. It is. Yeah.

SL: I remember getting to meet Slim Pickens . . .

BP: Yes, he was in the movie.

SL: . . . on the set.

BP: He was a wonderful man.

SL: He was [*laughs*] great.

BP: He was a great man. And some of the actors were very nice, and some of them weren't. [*Laughter*]

SL: Yes, I know. We won't name names.

BP: We won't go . . .

SL: But I wanted to get Slim Pickens in there 'cause he was so great.

BP: We won't go into that. He was.

SL: Yeah.

BP: He was fun. He was a gentleman. Really nice. And so that . . .

[02:50:30] SL: Well, you also—you mentioned Buffalo River. *The Thing* was filmed here in Arkansas . . .

BP: It was.

SL: . . . which is a good thing.

BP: Brought some economy into Mountain Home. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah, and people got to see how beautiful the Buffalo River was . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . and . . .

BP: They did.

SL: . . . you commandeered—I believe it was "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down." That was a Band recording.

BP: That's right. I bought the rights.

SL: Yeah. [02:50:59] It was a post-Civil War . . .

BP: Levon.

SL: . . . western and . . .

BP: Mh-hmm. Levon Helm's . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . famous and beautiful ballad.

SL: Yeah.

BP: The night they brought old Dixie down.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Yes, that was the good part.

SL: Yeah, that was fun. Well, anyway, I—so you had this, I guess, this interest in branching out a little bit . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . and getting a—taking a break from politics.

BP: Yes.

[02:51:28] SL: Kind of got your hand slapped a little bit in the movie business. [*Laughter*] All in all, it ended up working out okay, I think.

BP: Oh yeah, it did.

SL: Yeah, I mean . . .

BP: Eventually. Yes.

SL: . . . the foreign market . . .

BP: We recouped . . .

SL: . . . was good.

BP: . . . and television—there were many—it was just the beginning of television needing products. And now, of course, they eat it for breakfast. But we did well foreign, and we did well with TV.

SL: There you go.

BP: Late night movies. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah.

BP: And so we broke even, which was kind of a miracle, I think . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . the more I think about it. But it was fun. And then before I knew it, David decided to run for the Senate, you know, while he was . . .

SL: Governor.

BP: . . . right at the end of the governorship. And once again, thrown into the fray and really great candidates, you know. Ray Thornton and Jim Guy Tucker and David, pretty much a three-way race and . . .

SL: All respecting each other and . . .

[02:52:34] BP: Yeah, and they were all so worthy, you know. I mean, it

wasn't like there was someone that wasn't very, very capable of going . . .

SL: Right.

BP: . . . to the Senate. John McClellan had passed away the year before, and David, as governor, had appointed Kaneaster Hodges to fill the space. So here we go again. You know, we're going back to Washington, hopefully, and we're running a very big race, and it was wonderful. It turned out well for us and moved back. The boys were older. Sc—Dee was going to be a freshman in college. Mark was a junior in high school—or sophomore—and Dee—I mean, Scott was in the eighth grade. So they were a little older. It was a little easier.

SL: Easier.

[02:53:32] BP: And Washington itself was fabulous, and we threw ourselves right into it. And we had many friends left from the time before, and some of those had gone on to the Senate. And we knew people that were in the diplomatic corps—I mean, you know, it was just a great, great city. And I did a lot of work for the Kennedy Center and PEN/Faulkner, Ford Theatre, you know, there were all those interests. But what we soon discovered was that we were going to have three boys in college at the same time.

SL: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

BP: So I had—I went to work, and I was glad to do it. Actually, it was a great experience. I became an interior designer. I had no training in that field. I just had to make it up as I went along. But fortunately, I

had a good partner, Molly Boren, who—David Boren is—was in the Senate and he was governor with David—from Oklahoma. And then they . . .

SL: Right.

BP: . . . were in the Senate together. And Molly and I became partners. And we had a great time, and no shortage of . . .

SL: Clients.

BP: . . . clients. Just—people flocked in and I—we did anything that came up, whether it was the offices on the Hill or lobbyists' offices or agencies. We did homes. We did just whatever came in, and each one was different and a challenge, and it was great. We just had a good time with it, and we were able to send our boys . . .

SL: To college.

BP: . . . to college. [02:55:20] So that was a very big time, but I worked full time. Of course, David did, too, and I think one of the wonderful things about those years was that we were able to travel. You know, they had CODELs where senators went to different countries. And I also belonged to a group of women that went to third-world countries like, you know, India and Morocco and all these various—Egypt—places that—and we visited mainly women's organizations that were making a big difference in their children's lives and in their own. So we—you know, it was not only educational but it was also good works to be involved with, and did a lot of that.

SL: Making it better.

BP: Did a lot of that, and it was great. Loved that part.

[02:56:21] SL: So back in Arkansas there's—state politics is getting interesting, and there's some other folks that are coming up through the ranks. I know that . . .

BP: Well . . .

SL: . . . Congressman Hammerschmidt and y'all were good friends.

BP: We're great friends. Mh-hmm.

SL: And this is indicative of the time . . .

BP: It was.

SL: . . . back then that . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . you could be on opposite sides of the aisle.

BP: Big admirers of him.

SL: Still be friends.

BP: Yeah, he's fabulous.

SL: And trusting and respectful . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . which is hard to find these days.

BP: Yes.

[02:57:04] SL: But there was also—you had a guy named Bill Clinton . . .

BP: We did.

SL: . . . kind of coming up through.

BP: We did, and Bill Clinton, of course, was governor after David. He was our attorney general when David was governor. Wonderful. You

know, just smart as he could be. And David actually met Bill when he was maybe eighteen. He was driving a gubernatorial candidate, Frank Holt, and they met on the campaign trail. And then we were in Russellville, which used to be one of the great political events, the Women's Democratic Club. And Bill Clinton was running for John Paul Hammerschmidt's seat. And he spoke that night—he had two minutes. Well, they all did, but he actually stayed with his two minutes. [*Laughs*] The mo—one of the most electrifying speeches I've ever heard. And so we looked at each other and said, "Man, this guy [*laughter*—he's the one!" [*Laughter*]

SL: Yeah.

BP: "He's coming on." And . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . then he lost that race, but then he ran for attorney general, was elected, and then he ran for governor, was elected. And the rest is history. But we've always been close to Bill and Hillary. It's—our lives are intertwined and, you know, it—when David was in the Senate, he was thought of as Bill Clinton's best friend. Of course, Bill has a lot of best friends.

SL: Lot of best friends.

BP: [*Laughs*] Everybody's his best friend because he's their best—I mean, he is a good friend, so . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . he keeps up and all of that. But anyway—yes. And then, of

course, Hillary ran for the Senate later also. We were gone by then, but we've always been so proud of her, and she is incredible. And Chelsea—we've watched—known her since she was a baby and what a wonderful young woman she is. She's outstanding in her own right. And of course, Bill—what can you say? There's nobody in the world ever like him, and he's just unbelievable. He's a great guy.

[02:59:31] SL: You know, you mentioned Hillary being in the Senate after you guys were gone.

BP: Yes.

SL: What was it that—I member there was a—it was really kind of shocking to hear that David was gonna retire from the Senate. What was it you think that drove that?

BP: Well, David, I think, has always thought that the Senate seat did not belong to one person. Some people get there, and they are there for the next thirty years. I mean, John McClellan . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . for example. He always thought that he—three years was a good amount of time . . .

SL: Three terms.

BP: . . . to serve. Then you could get out, and you'd still be young enough to do other things. And my gosh, he's done so many other things since then. But he also had a heart attack during that period when he was in the Senate. And once again, like I said, you brush up against death, or you know, you have a . . .

SL: Puts things in perspective.

BP: You have a close call [*laughs*], let's say.

SL: Yeah, yeah.

[03:00:41] BP: And all of a sudden, you have a different perspective.

And do you want to spend the rest of your life doing this or do you want to possibly do something else? And I think that, you know, he made the right choice. Three terms is a magnificent amount of service. And overall, probably—see, we've been in Washington about twenty-five years. You know, we've been in and out. That's a good amount of time.

SL: Yeah.

BP: And as wonderful and as exciting as it is, there's no place like Arkansas. And we were anxious to come home, and we've never regretted it for even a New York minute. We're so happy to be here, and he's had a wonderful time here. He still is on the board of public broadcasting, Corporation of Public Broadcasting, so we go to Washington every, you know, few months, and we get to see all of our old pals. And they come through here . . .

SL: Right.

BP: . . . and see us. And of course, he was the founding dean of the Clinton School. He was the founding trustee of the Clinton Library. So, you know, we've been heavily involved there. And the Clinton School is just fabulous. And it's growing and prospering, and it makes you happy . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . to see such a good work. And he's also, of course, on the board of trustees at the University of Arkansas, and he has taught here. There was an interim there where he went to Harvard, and he was the dean of—he was Fellow, and then he was the dean of . . .

SL: Kennedy School.

BP: Well, it was the Institute of Politics . . .

SL: Institute of Politics.

BP: . . . in the Kennedy School.

SL: Yeah.

BP: So we had Boston to add to all of this wonderful adventure for three years in Boston. What a town. What a place. Harvard. You know, it's been good.

[03:02:52] SL: Yeah, I like to tell people that you guys flunked retirement.

BP: [*Laughs*] You're, right! We did. [*SL laughs*] That's the best way to put it. We've been busier now . . .

SL: I know.

BP: . . . than ever. And I think part of it is that we don't have that wonderful staff that used to back us up all the time. But we still do everything [*laughs*] that we used to do. It's hard.

SL: And you're still doing the interior design.

BP: I do. I do it for friends and former clients. A lot of people—I don't know. They don't think they can redo their house unless I come and

help them. So I, you know, I have people in Dallas; people in Atlanta; people in—all around that—Washington—that I go back and [*laughs*] fluff it up when they call me. They're cryin'. "Oh!" You know.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughter*] "Help me! Help me!"

BP: "Help!" [*Laughs*]

[03:03:53] SL: Well—but you love being with them, and you love . . .

BP: Yes, I do.

SL: . . . doing—and you love doing it.

BP: I do. I love it.

SL: So that's the big deal.

BP: It's vicarious. I get to spend somebody else's money [*SL laughs*] buying beautiful things. [*Laughter*]

SL: There you go. But really and truly, you still go—y'all still go to the second-hand stores, to the junk shops . . .

BP: Oh, gosh.

SL: . . . to the . . .

BP: I know.

[03:04:17] SL: I mean, you—it's like that—those first dates that you had with him. [*BP laughs*] You still haven't gotten out of the . . .

BP: We're still on a shoestring.

SL: . . . general store in Prairie Grove. [*BP laughs*] He's probably still buying jeans in Prairie Grove.

BP: He is. Well [*laughs*], he's buying them at resale shops now.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Goodwill. [*Laughs*]

SL: Goodwill. [*Laughter*]

BP: There's a marvelous place called Savers [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yes.

BP: . . . in Little Rock.

SL: Yeah.

BP: And you know, you can get a fine pair of jeans for four dollars there.  
[*Laughter*] And a shirt for three. It's wonderful. [*Laughs*]

SL: Tie for two.

BP: Yeah. [*Laughter*] I know it. Old habits are hard to break, that's all I  
can say. [*Laughter*] Oh!

SL: Well, you know . . .

[03:05:01] BP: Oh, we've started painting, too.

SL: Yeah, I want to hear about that. Now, you know, you . . .

BP: Yeah. I've painted before on and off most of—for a long time. But  
I've never really had the time. And then a few years ago I went back  
to school here at—to the art department—as a older person. You  
know, when David was governor, he had—he passed this wonderful  
law that you could go back to school free if you were over sixty-five.  
So I took advantage of that. I've been to UCA—I've been to UALR,  
I've been to UCA, and I've been here and—you know, taking art  
classes, art history . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: Whatever really interested me. It was pretty simple. And so there

was a period when I was really painting a lot. But now he's the one—he's painting all the time, and I'm not, so [*SL laughs*—well, I just painted a little bit this summer, but he really paints a lot.

[03:06:09] SL: So do you think that—I mean, you know, I asked you about art classes in high school, and they just didn't have 'em.

BP: They didn't really offer that.

SL: And so you gettin'—you didn't get to an art museum until you got to Washington, DC.

BP: That's right. I never saw a live painting . . .

SL: And so . . .

BP: . . . before.

SL: I mean, all of a sudden—well, of course, Washington, DC, is like this huge art repository.

BP: Oh, I know. Yeah.

SL: Everywhere you turn . . .

BP: The National Gallery.

SL: . . . and anywhere you go—yeah, every . . .

BP: But that's only the first. I mean . . .

SL: Yeah.

BP: . . . that you—yes, and all I had knew about art was what I'd read in books or seen pictures of in picture books. So imagine walking into the National Gallery of Art in Washington for the first time to see a real painting that I'd only seen in a book. It's overwhelming, you know. It's just . . .

[03:06:58] SL: You know, I wonder—course, my influence was probably  
Dick Knowles down the street from me . . .

BP: Yes. Yeah. And what a good one that was.

SL: An art historian that did large-scale paintings as well. But I think you  
were probably getting interested in art about the same time that I  
was.

BP: I think you're right.

SL: That's—I hadn't seen that till just now but . . .

BP: Yeah. Mh-hmm.

[03:07:20] SL: I just assumed that you knew all about art all along,  
but . . .

BP: No, no, no. Total novice and—pretty much. And still no real training  
to speak of. Just dabblin' around, you know.

SL: And you prefer to paint.

BP: Paint is . . .

SL: And you paint in acrylic?

BP: Either one. Oil . . .

SL: Oil or acrylic.

BP: Acrylic usually—like, if we're in New Mexico—acrylic 'cause it's so much  
easier and it dries faster.

SL: Right.

BP: But I've painted oil. Yeah, I like oil.

SL: Both. You like 'em both or do you prefer oil?

BP: I like 'em both. I think acrylic is—like I say, easier because it dries so

fast, and you can paint right over it if you make a mistake.

SL: Right.

BP: But I love oil. There's nothing like the depth of oil.

SL: Suspension.

BP: Plus it smells so good. *[Laughter]* It's the vicariousness. *[Laughter]*

SL: Is it—do you have a favorite area in art history?

BP: I like the impressionists, and I like American art—this century. Yeah. I like modern, contemporary art as a rule.

[03:08:39] SL: And so you still collect art. I mean, you're still an avid collector, right?

BP: I'm afraid I am. But it's mostly Arkansas art. It's affordable still, mostly. I don't have any of the big artists, like Roller Wilson or—you know, Carroll Cloar or Dombeck. Those great artists are really out of my reach. But we still collect, you know, when we can.

SL: Well, I feel most folks know that you're quite the champion for Arkansas art.

BP: We did a lot of Arkansas art shows when David was in the Senate. We would have an art show every year, and we would collect all of this art from all over the state and bring it to Washington, have a big reception, and it would hang for six months. And so a lot of people saw it. And we did the same thing in his Little Rock office, but that was basically student art or professor art in Little Rock. So yes, I'm very big on tryin' to help the artists of Arkansas, and there's so much talent here, it's unbelievable. Really extraordinary.

[03:09:56] SL: Okay now, there's one area that we haven't really touched on, and it's kind of preaching to the choir here. But one of the greatest things that I believe that you guys did when David left the Senate was the leftover campaign money that [*BP laughs*] you had. You started this little project called [*BP laughs*] the Pryor Center, or it was Arkansas Center for Oral and Visual History, I think, originally.

BP: Yes, David does not . . .

SL: It's more . . .

BP: . . . like to have his name on anything.

SL: I know! He's . . .

BP: He thinks that should . . .

SL: . . . gonna have to get over that.

BP: He thinks that should be on things that—after you're dead.

SL: Oh.

BP: 'Cause he thinks [*laughs*] so many people name things after someone and, you know, like the Hoover Building in Washington. Who knew that J. Edgar Hoover was such a vicious person and—you know.

SL: So things don't come to light until [*BP laughs*] after . . .

BP: Well, I—he thinks . . .

SL: . . . they're gone and everyone . . .

BP: . . . it's better if, you know, you name things after people. But I think that someone decided that it might be easier if it had his name—our name on it. So that's why our name is on it. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, there's also—you both have a great passion for . . .

BP: We do.

SL: . . . Arkansas people . . .

BP: We do.

SL: . . . and Arkansas stories. And Lord knows, Arkansas has been through the mill as far as other people telling the story of Arkansas . . .

BP: That's right.

SL: . . . besides the people from Arkansas.

BP: That's right.

SL: And so . . .

BP: Exactly.

SL: . . . there is a great passion and a great love for . . .

BP: That's exactly right.

SL: . . . your—it came from the heart when you guys started . . .

BP: Exactly right.

SL: . . . to do this. [03:11:37] And I'm happy to say that it's still alive.

BP: Still kickin'. I wish we were . . .

SL: Still kickin'.

BP: . . . rich.

SL: Well, I think . . .

BP: And we would maybe—you know, it would be so much easier, but [SL laughs] maybe good things are not easy sometimes.

SL: That's right.

BP: But I think it's a wonderful thing, and the Pryor Center does a great

job.

SL: Well, we're still [*BP laughs*]*—*I think we're out of the inventing-the-wheel part of it. [*Laughter*]

BP: Good. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, I—you know, you have to remember you guys were adamant about it being visual as well.

BP: Yes, yes.

SL: And all the oral history programs before then . . .

BP: Yes.

SL: . . . were just . . .

BP: Yeah, I . . .

SL: . . . transcripts.

[03:12:15] BP: I think you may have had a lot to do with that.

SL: [*Laughs*] Well . . .

BP: I think it was your vision, but it's—it was a great vision, and you were right. Exactly.

SL: Well, that's not—I'm ready to stop now. [*Laughter*] That's enough of that mess. [*Laughter*] I'm sorry I brought it up. [*Laughter*] Well—so . . .

BP: Yes.

[03:12:40] SL: You have [*BP laughs*]*—*Dee is now working for Microsoft.

BP: He is.

SL: Afting—after working for FedEx for many years.

BP: Yes.

SL: Federal Express for many years.

BP: And he was in the State Department during the Clinton . . .

SL: Clintons.

BP: . . . years. He was—had a great time And before that, he had his own company, a PR company. So he's had a good career. He has been in Washington for many years. And he dropped out of Hendrix. He got the—we call the junior blues—and dropped out. And then when he moved to Washington, he did go back to George Washington University at night and got his business [*laughs*] degree. And he said, boy, was he sorry he dropped out of school. [*Laughter*] He said he wished he had listened to us. [*Laughter*] That's always good to hear.

SL: Yeah, it is good to hear.

[03:13:35] BP: And of course, Mark has had a very interesting and good time. He is a lawyer, and he practiced law, and then he ran for the legislature. He ran for attorney general and was beat once, and then he won the next time around. And then, of course, he ran for Senate and was elected. And he loves Washington, he loves the Senate, he loves his job. It's amazing. I don't know how he takes things that are going on now, but he's hopeful. Very hopeful and has not lost the faith. [*Laughs*] And Scott, our youngest son, works in New York. He makes television spots. He's a producer. He loves his work.

SL: He does great work.

BP: Oh, he loves his work. And . . .

SL: I've looked at his work. It's unbelievable.

BP: It's hard living in New York, but that's where the business is, and so that's where he is. And he's doing very well also, so we're—you know, we're happy.

SL: Well, you all have many, many blessings.

BP: We do. We do. We're lucky. Lucky.

[03:14:54] SL: Well okay, now, is there anything else that we should be talking about, because . . .

BP: My gosh, I don't know. Haven't we covered everything?

SL: No, we have not. You can't do it in one day. [*BP laughs*] You can't do it in eight hours. You can't do it in fourteen hours. [*BP laughs*] Much less three and a half.

BP: Let's leave something to the imagination.

SL: Ooh! [*BP laughs*] Yeah. All those . . .

BP: Let's keep . . .

SL: . . . oral historians can say, "Well, you didn't ask her about this."

BP: Let's keep a little mystery. [*Laughs*]

[03:15:23] SL: Okay, now, wait. [*BP laughs*] I do want to say something. There are a couple of things. [*BP laughs*] First of all . . .

BP: Uh-oh.

SL: You did raise a big splash in the news when you got your hair cut [*BP laughs*] as First Lady of Arkansas.

BP: I did.

SL: It . . .

BP: Unintentionally.

SL: I mean, you got this—it was an Afro, basically.

BP: It was. Yes.

SL: And it just infuriated people.

BP: It did. And you know, I think it reminded people of—course, you know, it was times—Civil Rights, things like that [*laughs*], the Black Panthers, Angela Davis—I think it reminded people of a radical time. I did it because it was kind of wash and wear. [*Laughter*] All you had to do was wash it and fluff it up, and you were ready.

SL: Yeah.

[03:16:14] BP: You never had to think about it again. Up until then, I had long, blonde hair.

SL: I know, and it was—you . . .

BP: And it was . . .

SL: Beautiful.

BP: . . . just so much trouble.

SL: Work. Yeah. [*Laughter*]

BP: So yes . . .

SL: So you were doing a practical thing but . . .

BP: I was doing a practical thing. And the other thing that was surprising was that I never thought about people thinking about what's on your head. I was thinking about what's in your head—to be judged about what's on your head is such a shock. [*Laughs*] But I will say this—by the end of that year, after all the editorials, the cartoons, the bad phone calls, the anonymous letters [*laughs*—that Hillary Clinton went

right out and got one. Eddie Sutton got one. And you know, before the end of the year, men and women all over this state had Afros.

And I think that says volumes, don't you?

SL: Yeah.

[03:17:22] BP: I think it says volumes. And I thought it was all support.

[*Laughter*]

SL: Affirmation.

BP: That's what I like to think.

SL: Affirmation. [*Laughter*]

BP: Affirmation.

SL: Yeah.

BP: Yeah, men and women.

SL: Well now, was there anything else that was controversial on your part?

BP: Oh, my goodness sakes.

SL: I mean, you know, I know that you—there was probably some hit for leaving the First Lady role and doing film and coming back and . . .

BP: Yeah.

SL: . . . all that. But it wasn't as . . .

BP: I think . . .

SL: . . . vicious as the hair thing.

BP: I think it was controversial. Yes, I do. But it all turned out well.

SL: Yeah.

BP: So that was good. [*Laughs*] And that's enough of—said about that.

[*Laughter*]

[03:18:13] SL: Okay. [BP laughs] Well, so I know—and [BP laughs]—I know there's gonna be things that I wish that I'd . . .

BP: Oh, too bad.

SL: . . . brought up. But [BP laughs]—tough, huh?

BP: Oh, boo-hoo! [Laughs]

SL: I've got to thank you for puttin' up with us as much . . .

BP: Oh, I've had . . .

SL: I mean, we . . .

BP: . . . a wonderful time.

SL: We've moved our—we've made a studio out of your house. [Laughter]  
We have wires and stands . . .

BP: This is a big ego trip for me.

SL: . . . and lines . . .

BP: Are you kidding?

SL: Okay. [Laughs]

BP: I love puff pieces. [Laughter]

SL: Well, is there anything else that you want to say or talk about?

BP: I think that we have covered the waterfront. [Laughs]

[End of Interview 03:18:58]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]