

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

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Arkansas Memories Project

Jim Guy Tucker
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford
August 29, 2012
Little Rock, Arkansas

Objective

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

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

Transcript Methodology

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

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 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
 - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Scott Lunsford interviewed Jim Guy Tucker on August 29, 2012, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Jim Guy Tucker, thank you so much for giving us at the Pryor Center all this day to invade your home, move your furniture around, bring in a bunch of gear and people, and string cable everywhere. That's very generous to let us come into your life like this.

Jim Guy Tucker: Well, de—delighted to have you, Scott, and—uh— appreciate the—uh—project that the Pryor Center has undertaken. It's a wonderful gift to the people of the state.

SL: You know, we think we have the best jobs in the world. Uh—we get to sit across from folks like you—uh—all over this state, and it's a wonderful state, and they're wonderful people, and they—they've believed in hard work and doing the right thing and—and have raised good children [*camera clicks*] and affected the lives of many people. It's just rewarding.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: It's so—we're always lifted up whenever we get done with the—with an interview, so it's—it's an honor to be here. Let me say that today's date is August 29, and the year is 2012. And we are at the Jim Guy and Betty Tucker residence in Little Rock, Arkansas. And, Jim Guy, we are recording this in high definition, a number of different formats, so

we'll walk away with something. If one thing goes down, we'll put it on something else. And when we're done with this, we'll send you back the raw footage of the interview, and we'll start working on a transcript. Um—we'll ask you to look at that raw footage and make sure that you're okay with it. And if there's anything that you're uncomfortable about, we'll take it out. For example, maybe—in the pa—we've maybe had to take two things out of all the interviews we've ever done, and it's usually has something to do with a no-good brother-in-law or [*laughter*] saying—saying something about somebody off—kinda offhanded and then to go, "Oh my gosh, I'll never" . . .

JGT: Oh.

SL: . . . "hear the end of this if this gets out." So—uh—but we—w—we want it to be your story. It's your interview. We will be good stewards of it. [00:02:07] Uh—we won't—we're not here to get you or anything. This is your chance to just give—uh—um—us your story. And we're—we'll encourage—uh—students, graduate and undergraduate students to—doing research on Arkansas history to use this material. We're partnering up with Arkansas History Lesson Plan, and they're now integrating Pryor Center footage into that lesson plan, and they'll be coming to our website, so this material will be available in the public schools. Um—we'll encourage documentarians to tell Arkansas's story. It's all about the people of Arkansas telling their own story . . .

JGT: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . instead of someone else telling those stories for us. Um—and i—
if—i—once we get the transcript the way you like it and once we get
the video the way you like it, then—um—we will post this stuff on the
web. [*Camera clicks*] And we'll send you a DVD of the—what we call
our highlight clips. We won't post all of the video on the web 'cause
it'll be a big video. [*Camera clicks*] Um—but we'll make sure that
you're comfortable with what we do post videowise. We'll post all of
the audio of—of the approved—uh—interview and the transcript as
well. And people will be able to download the transcript and the audio
so they can have an audio book, or they can do their research, they
can read through the interview a little bit more quickly, do a word
search for it—topics that they might be interested in. So having said
all of that, if you—if you are comfortable with that, or if you have
any—or if you have any questions about that, we can address those
now, or if you're comfortable with it, we'll just keep going.

JGT: No, I'm—I'm comfortable with it.

[00:03:51] SL: Thank you so much. Well, Jim Guy, we usually—uh—or
I—it's—I've been calling you Jim Guy . . .

JGT: That's fine.

SL: . . . from the moment that I've been talking with you.

JGT: Yep.

SL: I know it's—would be better to call you Governor because you were a
governor for the state of Arkansas, a quite remarkable tenure that you

had there. But, Jim Guy, I usually start with where and when you were born.

JGT: Kay. Um—I was born during the Second World War, June the thirteenth, 1943. Uh—my mother and father were both born in Arkansas, but my father was temporarily on assignment to Oklahoma City for the Social Security Administration, and—um—so I was born in Oklahoma City. I have no memories of being in Oklahoma. I've seen some old photos—uh—uh—of me there, but I was back in Arkansas by early 1945—uh—is my understanding. And my childhood—I remember really only Arkansas.

[00:05:00] SL: Did you—um—I—w—I'll—I'll want to learn a lot about your father and—and your mother, but did you ever know either set of grandparents?

JGT: Uh—I only have a recollection of knowing my mother's father—uh—F.O. White. Um—uh—he was called Judge White because he had been county judge of White County. Uh—he was from—lived in the Bald Knob [*SL laughs*] uh—uh—in White County and—uh—had been county judge there. Uh—in fact—uh—uh—he was defeated for reelection in one of his many terms—uh—by Wilbur Mills, who later became Chairman Mills and whose seat—uh—I took when I went to Congress many years later. Um—uh—but Grandfather White, I did know, and—uh—he was a wonderful, very pleasant man. Um—he was a—uh—lay pastor in the Reorganized Latter Day Saint Church, which he raised my mother in. Uh—he—uh—uh—was a delightful man. He was quite old

when I knew him, and—uh—when I was about twelve years old, he was visiting at our house on Stonewall Road in Little Rock—uh—where I grew up, and—uh—we were having breakfast, and he had a sudden heart attack and died there. So—uh—I was very fond of him, and his death was sudden, but—uh—in—in some ways quick and merciful. Uh—and—uh—I enjoyed him a great deal. But I did not know any of my other grandparents. Uh—my father's—uh—mother knew me when I was a little boy.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: Uh—but I have no recollection of her. Uh—my father was born in 1893, and my mother was born in the early 1900s, and so their parents were—were very elderly or—or deceased by the time I was born.

[00:07:09] SL: Um—let's get back to your—uh—your mother's daddy. So did he live in Bald Knob? Is that . . .

JGT: He—he lived in Bald Knob. Uh—after he was defeated by—uh—uh—Wilbur Mills, he lived there for a period of time, but then he went and stayed with—uh—one of his children in California.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: Uh—my aunt—uh—out in—uh—the Los Angeles area in California.

SL: So you didn't really get to—did you ever get to visit him when he was in Bald Knob?

JGT: Yes. We went to his house—uh—in Bald Knob when I was a child, and—uh—it was a—a country house, and . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: . . . you know, it had—uh—a well outside and a restroom outside, an outhouse.

SL: An outhouse. Uh-huh.

JGT: And—uh—but they'd have strawberries in the summertime and mosquitoes in the summertime, and . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . uh—and it was—uh—just a rural farmhouse. And—and he is buried in Bald Knob as well.

[00:08:01] SL: Did—did his house have electricity?

JGT: It did have electricity, yes. I don't recall it having a telephone, but I could be wrong.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: I do remember that—and I still call refrigerators iceboxes. [*Laughter*] I do remember that his refrigerator was an icebox, literally. They brought in a big block of ice, and you put it in the refrigerator, and that's how you kept things cold.

SL: Um—so was it actually in Bald Knob, or just outside Bald Knob? I . . .

JGT: It was—it was just outside of Bald Knob . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: . . . in the countryside. So a—uh—a typical—uh—early 1950s or late 1940s rural Arkansas, countryside dirt road.

SL: Uh—single story?

JGT: Single-story, white . . .

SL: White.

JGT: . . . farmhouse.

SL: Yeah. Um—so did he have any—uh—um—I don't know how old he may have been at that time, but did he have any livestock or a garden or . . .

JGT: Not—not . . .

SL: . . . did he have anyone living . . .

JGT: . . . not that I . . .

SL: . . . with him out there?

JGT: Oh, I recall a garden, but that was about all.

SL: Uh-huh.

[00:09:03] JGT: Uh—one of his other children, my mother's brother, Foster White . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: . . . who was named after F.O., which stood for Foster . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: . . . lived in Augusta in Woodruff County.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And—uh—I visited there very, very frequently. Uh—Augusta is just south of Newport on the White River. And—uh—that—their little house was in town. They also had an icebox. They had some chickens out back. And—uh—uh—I loved going up there. Uh—it was a very small—uh—rural Arkansas town. Relatively prosperous compared to the way such towns are today.

SL: Right.

JGT: There was a lot of farming, so the people had jobs there.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: And—uh—he worked at the car dealership. But we'd go and—uh—I—I know when there was a big rainstorm, my cousins and I would go play in the ditches where the water would gather and run off, and—uh—uh—we'd walk downtown and eat at the soda shop and stuff like that. It was great—very, very small-town Arkansas of another era.

[00:10:10] SL: Uh—so—uh—okay. Now, you've kind of opened the door about Augusta. The—uh—they had a soda shop there.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: Was it also the . . .

JGT: Drugstore. Drugstore. Mh-hmm.

SL: Drugstore or hardware store combination.

JGT: It's a drugstore, hardware store—I . . .

SL: General . . .

JGT: . . . I mentioned my uncle worked at the automobile dealership and—uh—so it was a bustling town then.

[00:10:31] SL: I—do you have any recollection of what the population may have been back then?

JGT: I couldn't recall that accurately at all. It's—uh—I'm sure it is much smaller today.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: And they used to have the White River Water Carnival—uh—up in

Batesville, Arkansas.

SL: Yes.

JGT: And folks from Newport would go up to Batesville, and I remember going there many times. My mother—uh—had a Merle Norman Cosmetic Studio there that she—uh—uh—operated, and so I'd go up and visit there. And we apparently lived in Batesville for a period of time during my childhood. I have no memory of it, but the housing was very scarce here—uh—post war, and for a period of time, we actually lived in Batesville. Uh—but it was very, very short, and I don't recall it.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:11:14] JGT: But I do recall Batesville and Newport very well in those years. And towns like Batesville and Newport were—uh—just essential—uh—uh—living places in the countryside because of the large rural population. And you thought of those as—just about as much as you would Little Rock . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: . . . as a place to live, and—uh—uh—the activities there were virtually the equal of Little Rock, in my view, during those days. They were country towns—uh—but they were there.

SL: Well, you know, it's interesting—uh—there's all—there seems to be so many towns that almost became the capital of Arkansas.

JGT: Yes.

SL: And they were kind of stretched along the White River.

JGT: Mh-hmm.

SL: I mean—um—Des Arc was one of them . . .

JGT: That's right.

SL: . . . on the White River, and—uh—so the White River kind of—um—drove those communities, I believe.

JGT: Yes, and—uh—because of my relatives—uh—uh—I was in Augusta and Newport and Batesville on a—on a frequent basis.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: And on the river. Uh—the—um—uh—later in life—uh—my oldest sister's husbands was from—uh—Trumann, Arkansas.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: And I'd go visit over there when I was still a boy as well because my sister Frances was eleven years older than I.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:12:32] JGT: And—uh—the—uh—the—they kept bees. And I was always going out trying to get into the beehives and to get at the honey that my—uh—brother-in-law's father had. [*SL laughs*] But—but I—I knew that area of the state and—uh—the rural countryside and the people in it and the way they made a living and—uh—the—uh—you know, customs and habits of the communities. And—uh—it was a part of my growing up, and even though I grew up in Little Rock, that was still a part of me.

[00:13:03] SL: So—uh—was those mo—were those mostly summers that you would get to . . .

JGT: Oh, we'd—we'd go on summers, but—uh—you know, it was nothing for Mother to decide to go spend a . . .

SL: Weekend.

JGT: . . . a Saturday night and—uh—go to church on Sunday—uh—uh—and hang out and drive back to Little Rock on Sunday night. Now, the drives were much longer. Um—uh—I don't recall—uh—my Grandfather White did live on a dirt road, but the other roads we were on were usually paved roads, but they were narrow, two-lane, curvy, narrow roads. There were no interstates around.

SL: No shoulders. [*Laughs*]

JGT: No four lane ?homes?—uh—the—uh—so—and no air-conditioning in the car.

SL: Right.

JGT: Uh—so we drove with the windows down except when we were on a dirt road, and then you couldn't decide whether you would rather have air in the car or breathe the dust.

SL: That's right.

JGT: Uh—because it was pretty hot in Arkansas.

[00:13:56] SL: Um—so—now, was it your—um—was it your—uh—mother's brother that would check in with your grandfather or was it a brother of his? Was it . . .

JGT: Uh—no, that was my mother's brother—uh—Uncle—Uncle Foster—uh . . .

SL: Uncle Foster. Uh-huh.

JGT: And then—uh—she had another brother—uh—Jake White.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: Uncle Jake. Uh—and—uh—I was very fond of both of them. Uh—uh—
Uncle Foster had—uh—bad arthritis, and so did Uncle Jake, but—uh—
Uncle Jake served in World War II and then got called up again in
Korea. He served in Burma, in the Burma Theater.

SL: Wow.

JGT: And—uh—was injured by a land mine but stayed in the army. Uh—
and—uh—lived a very, very long time. Uh—died in the late 1990s—
uh—at the Veteran's Administration Hospital here in Little Rock, but—
uh . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: Uh—I have some old childhood pictures somewhere with my—with
his—uh—army cap on my head, and I was about five years old sittin'
on the couch.

[00:15:05] SL: So did they—uh—take you hunting or fishing or—what—
what was it about them that—uh—uh—you admired so much?

JGT: Well, they were fun—fun people.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: Uh—they had good families. Uh—Foster—uh—Jake didn't marry until
very late in life and didn't have any children, but Uncle Foster had—
uh—uh—daughters, three daughters, that I was very fond of, one of
whom was my age. The other two were a bit older.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: Uh—but I was very fond of them. Uh—I had two sisters—uh—my sister Carol, who's five years older than I, and then my sister Frances, who's eleven years older. Uh—and so—uh—I was comfortable with kids that were older than I was as a result of growing up with them and, like all children do—uh—combating them—uh . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JGT: [*Laughs*] Trying to survive as you grow up.

SL: Well, you get out in the country and—uh—it's a little bit more wide open, too, the spaces—it—there's all kinds of adventures that . . .

JGT: Yes.

SL: . . . that can happen.

[00:16:07] JGT: Uh—the—the Delta areas, I think, were a little calmer than perhaps some of the mountain areas . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: . . . to grow up in. And—uh—uh—but the—uh—but—but it was fascinating. I'm trying to remember the name of the club in Newport—uh—that—uh—Elvis Presley played at a lot.

SL: Blue Moon?

JGT: Uh—it—the—guess it was the Blue Moon, yes. [*SL laughs*] And—uh—I can remember visiting that club. It was a tin-sided shack outside of Newport and—uh—big. Seemed big to me. And—uh—when I was finally old enough as a teenager to sneak in, I did.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: And I don't remember seeing Elvis there, but I—I heard a lot of good

music there.

SL: Uh—it's a famous, famous place.

JGT: Yep.

SL: Lots of folks have talked about that.

JGT: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Governor Beebe talked at length about that.

JGT: The Blue—Blue Moon was quite a place.

[00:16:53] SL: Um—well, so—um—I—I like to talk about these—uh—
um—trips—uh—to visit your—your grandfather and your—um—uh—I
guess those would be—uh—great uncles?

JGT: Uh—just uncles.

SL: Or just uncles.

JGT: Mh-hmm.

SL: It'd be uncles. That's right. Um—so—um—did you—I mean, did you—
uh—did they take you fishing or hunting, or did you do any—were you
able or were you encouraged to help around the house out there?

JGT: We—we did some minor chores, but nothing . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: . . . spectacular. Uh—the—uh—my father took me fishing a few times.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: And—uh—squirrel hunting. But—uh—he was—uh—he was old—uh—
relatively speaking.

SL: Well, sure. Yeah.

JGT: His health was poor.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: He—uh—had been gassed in World War I and—and machine gunned.

The machine gun wound healed and didn't bother him, but his lungs were damaged badly. He had tuberculosis in the early 1950s and went to the sanatorium up at Booneville . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: . . . for a year or so to get over that. Uh—and then, ultimately, he'd been a smoker, and he got lung cancer and—and died of lung cancer.

So he was not—um—a dad who physically could take me out a lot.

But we did some fishing—uh—and—uh—and we did a little bit of squirrel hunting. However, I had lots of friends who loved to fish and squirrel hunt . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: . . . and so I did do a lot of hunting, lot of fishing, as a boy. But I did it with my—uh . . .

SL: Peers.

JGT: . . . other boys my age . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: . . . or by myself rather than with a—an adult.

[00:18:38] SL: Well, let's just go ahead and talk about your father for a while. Um—now you were saying that you were born in Oklahoma City and he—because he was stationed there wor—doing something with Social Security?

JGT: That's right.

SL: And this was i—in 1943.

JGT: Uh—this would've been about 1943, forty—uh—well, prior to 1943 and in 1943.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: He'd gone over before I was born.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: Yeah.

[00:19:01] SL: Uh—and what was it that he did with the Social Security folks?

JGT: Well—uh—Dad—uh—had been—uh—a state auditor of Arkansas—uh—for a term or so . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: . . . back in the—uh—early 1920s, just after World War I.

SL: Uh-huh.

JGT: And—uh—it—when the Social Security system was being put together—uh—the administration called in some former state auditors to help put together the financial structure, the books, of how this would be kept and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: . . . audited. And so my father went to Washington for that purpose, and he and my mother lived in Washington for a period of time, Washington, DC, for a period of time when he was doing that. He later was—uh—appointed to manage—uh—I'm sorry—was appointed to manage the Social Security system in Arkansas, but occasionally

apparently got called to other states, perhaps when someone had left the office . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . and they needed a temporary manager.

SL: Uh-huh.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:02] JGT: And so that was the reason he was there in Washington.

But he—his adult life was spent working on Social Security. It was a dinner-table conversation for me, so I learned about Social Security from the time I was old enough to pay attention to the adult conversation.

[Tape stopped]

[00:20:21] SL: Jim Guy, we had to take a little break. We had the trash

folks come and picking up the trash, and their truck was kinda loud.

And you had just a little moment there when you were remembering about when your dad retired. Do—so he—we were talking about how he had been a state auditor, and he had been called to Washington to help set up how the Social Security stuff was gonna run within the states, and he would occasionally get called to other states to help or fill in when there was a vacancy or they were having issues. And you also said that Social Security was a topic of discussion at the dinner table, and . . .

JGT: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . we'll go back to the dinner table, but I was just—it sounds like to

me that if it was talked about at the dinner table that your father probably had a passion for it and believed in it and apparently served very well. And I think you were going to try to say something about what they gave him when he retired or when that job was over.

[00:21:30] JGT: Well, the—my father really liked Social Security, and he enjoyed the job he was doing immensely. He retired from Social Security about 1960, [19]61. And the—at his retirement, they provided a gold watch for him. He died in 1964 just a few years later, and it was clear that he was going to be dying soon. Many years after that, in 1976, I was elected to the United States Congress and was placed on the Ways and Means Committee, which has a subcommittee called Social Security Subcommittee.

SL: You bet.

JGT: So I wore my father's retirement-from-Social-Security watch to the Congress and wore it in all of the Social Security Subcommittee meetings of the House Ways and Means Committee. And I was amazed at how much I knew about Social Security from just having listened to my father discuss it at dinner table or discuss it with my mother. And I got to ask questions, or my sisters asked him questions over those years. So it was something that stuck with me on into my life.

SL: Well that's—you know, that you had his watch on for all of that really kind of kept him with you and maybe helped you stay focused on the work in front of you.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: I mean, there was—you brought some passion into the meetings, I bet. [00:23:14] So your father must have been fairly well educated?

JGT: Yes. He actually had a law degree from Georgetown in Washington, DC. But he never practiced law. He had—he was born down in Union County from my grandfather, Guy Beckwith Tucker. He was riding behind my grandfather on a horse when my grandfather was ambushed and had his left arm blown off.

SL: Oh my gosh!

JGT: And my father was carrying the mail. And my grandfather survived, and my grandfather then got into politics. My father, when he was old enough, joined the army and chased down in Mexico—got called up and chased down in Mexico with the Arkansas National Guard along the Mexican border. Came back, got out of the army, and within a matter of months was called back up by the army for World War I. So he went to World War I, was machine gunned, and hit in the leg in one location, and badly hit by gas so . . .

SL: Mustard gas?

JGT: Mustard gas, so his lungs were severely damaged by that. But he came out of the army as a captain, came back, and you know, he told me one or—one funny story, and I got a few of his maps and so forth. But it was a very, very unpleasant experience for the most part. And he simply did not talk about war. Did not want to do it, did not want to tell stories about it at all. So that made a impression on me. The—

then by the time World War II came along, he was much too old to be called up and was managing Social Security at that time. [00:25:34] But I got some good, old pictures of him in uniform and some records of what he did in the war and so forth, but he never would talk about it.

SL: You know, that's not unusual. It—the scars are deep.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: Those cuts are deep, and you know, I think it's as much to spare the children as it is the pain of, you know, reliving it.

JGT: That's right.

SL: I just kind of get the feeling, having interviewed as many as I have, that there's a hesitation to prolong all that horror that war is.

[00:26:17] JGT: Well, the only story he ever told me that he did share was—I was driving him downtown one day so I could drive the car back. And they—he had—he and his colleagues were taking cover from artillery fire in France, and the house that they had gone inside to get shelter from the artillery fire was hit pretty heavily by the shells, causing the floor to collapse, and they fell into this dark basement. There were no lights, and it was the middle of the night, and they were struggling around trying to find stuff, and finally, they began to see enough light. Lit some matches. And they realized that they had not fallen into just a basement, but into a wine cellar.

SL: Oh. [*Laughter*]

JGT: And needless to say, they had a great deal of difficulty getting out of

that wine cellar. [*Laughter*] And they tried to consume every bottle of wine [*SL laughs*] that was down there before they got out. But they did finally get out and go on about their business. But that was the one thing he would tell me, but it's the only story he ever gave me. I found some of his maps, a little bit of his diaries, and so forth, and provided those down to the MacArthur Museum here in Little Rock. But aside from that, virtually nothing out of his mouth about the war. He just did not want to talk about it.

SL: Did not want to go back.

JGT: He did not go to see war movies. There was no television around in those days. Just starting, and he never watched that. So it clearly had a big impact on him.

[00:28:10] SL: Okay, so let me think for just a moment here. We've been talking about your dad and his family. His father, your grandfather—ambushed and had an arm blown off . . .

JGT: Yeah.

SL: . . . while your dad was riding behind him on the horse . . .

JGT: Riding horseback behind him on the horse. Yeah, my grandfather on my father's side was Guy Beckwith Tucker. Guy B. Tucker. And he was a member of families—Tucker family that had come down from, ultimately, the islands out in the Caribbean down to DC, Virginia, went through World War—or through the civil—or through the Revolutionary War—down on into Russia—I m—into Georgia and ultimately over to southern Arkansas following the Civil War. Moved into the El Dorado

area, the Union County area. And the town lived in was called Champagnolle, Arkansas. No longer exists. I've been out to visit the land there on the Ouachita River where Champagnolle was located, but Champagnolle was a key port on the Ouachita River, and lots of vessels stopped there just down from Camden in what was Union County, and still is Union County. And they had a home there, and that's where Guy B. and his wife, my grandmother, lived and had their children, including my father. [00:29:59] The—but my grandfather, Guy Beckwith, also was appointed city marshal for the city of El Dorado. And they—in the city of El Dorado, he had deputies, and it was a pretty tough town. This was before oil . . .

SL: Before the oil—yeah, sure.

JGT: . . . was discovered there, but it was still a booming town. The Ouachita was a source of activity. Railroad tracks were coming along about this time. A lot of people moving in and out and good commercial activity. [00:30:35] There was a Parnell family that lived there, and they lived mostly outside of town, but they had stores there in town. And there was a conflict that developed frequently between the Parnells and my grandfather. And the—there were several different altercations that occurred between folks who were associated with my father and the Parnells. There was an occasion when my grandfather and his deputies had to go pick up a Parnell off of the railroad train that was trying to leave to go from El Dorado to Texarkana and bring 'em back for a criminal trial. But finally, on the

courthouse square in El Dorado, there was a confrontation one day between the Parnells and my grandfather and his deputy and a shoot-out, a pistol shoot-out, rifle shoot-out. My grandfather was wounded multiple times in the shooting. The Parnells were primarily killed, several Parnells killed, and the National Guard was called out . . .

SL: My gosh.

JGT: . . . because the battle was so fierce, and there was a nearby National Guard headquarters. But that was a very touchy thing. The headlines in the *Arkansas Gazette* covered it and said he was dead . . .

SL: Oh!

JGT: . . . because they thought he'd been killed, but he did survive. And then there were more shootings after that. And in one of the subsequent shootings, he was charged with murder and acquitted.

SL: As the sheriff.

JGT: But—my grandfather, yes. Charged with murder and acquitted. But the—there was a terrific fight going on. The Parnell family essentially all left El Dorado—part of a settlement with them in the courts, and everybody was, "You're gone." The—but my grandfather stayed, and then on a ride back out to Champagnolle one day on his horse coming from picking up mail in El Dorado, he and my father were ambushed sitting on the horse, and that blew my grandfather's left arm off. And my dad told me that he just was sure to tell his dad once he fell off in the sandpile there at the house, which probably saved his life, he was sure to tell his grandfather—my grandfather, his dad—that he had not

lost any of the mail. [*SL laughs*] Because on a previous trip, he had lost some mail, and my grandfather was unhappy about it. But he recovered from that and got into state politics and ran for and was elected state commissioner of mines, agriculture, and railroad. And later he became a Democratic National Committee man and went to the Democratic National Convention in Baltimore where Wilson was nominated, and they had a very good time. So he was active in the Democratic party. Died in the early 1920s while working for my father, who at that point had been appointed and was serving as auditor of the state.

[00:34:08] SL: Do you have—can you even say—do you have any idea what the fight was about between your grandfather and the Parnells?

JGT: It seemed to arise over a number of things. And the—I have since had the opportunity to meet with the Parnells who are back there. When I was in high school, I played left tackle across from a right tackle who was a Parnell. [*SL laughs*] He's now a doctor. But he was a . . .

SL: So y'all didn't get into it.

JGT: He was a do—no, but we know who each other were.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: We knew one another. And acknowledged that. Shook hands. But it was a very sensitive thing, and trying to get any member of the Parnell family to talk about it or any member of my family to talk about it until just very recently simply did not happen. But I was in El Dorado a few weeks back, and Parnells from California came in, and

we had a press conference down at the courthouse in El Dorado and answered questions of the press as to what happened to each family, which was delightful. [00:35:10] The [*SL laughs*]*—*but my father told me a story about one incident when he came back from World War I. He was walking up Broadway in Little Rock. He had on his army uniform. A heavy rainstorm started. And a car pulled up with the old double doors that opened out like so.

SL: Suicide doors.

JGT: And the car was—back seat was full of three or four women, young women, who said, "Soldier, you want to come in out of the rain?" He was delighted to see the women . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JGT: . . . and he was delighted to get out of the rain, so he got in the car, and he pulled off his hat and introduced himself, and they all broke into hysterical laughter.

SL: 'Cause they were all . . .

JGT: And he wanted to know what was so funny. And they disclosed that they were all Parnells. [*Laughter*] He didn't think it was funny. He had the car stopped immediately and got out in the rain and walked away because this was still so close to the . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JGT: . . . events that it was still a very, very touchy proposition. So there've been a couple little books written about it, and there is now a—an annual event down in El Dorado every summer where the

shooting is reenacted, and . . .

SL: You're kidding me.

JGT: . . . I'm asked to come down every year and—which I do, but it's part of the regular summer activity.

SL: Wow. I've never heard that.

JGT: Yeah.

[00:36:38] SL: Well, I'd love to go see that. [*JGT laughs*] And get the real s . . .

JGT: Only problem with it is they have it in late July or early August when it's awfully hot . . .

SL: It's really hot.

JGT: . . . but—yeah.

SL: Yeah. Yeah. That's fascinating. [00:36:54] Okay, so let's talk a little bit about your mom.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: Now, what was her maiden name? White?

JGT: She was Willie Maude White. And her daddy, F.O. White, Judge White, the—she had grown up in Searcy and had gone to, I think it was called Galloway's Women's College, Galloway Women's College, and so—very unusual, but she had gone to a college, a women's college there in Searcy, when she was a young girl. And that would have been during the teens . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . 1915, 1920, thereabouts. The—I don't know much about what

she did during the 1920s, but she met my father about 1930. They were married in [19]31. And my sister Frances was born not long after that, and then my sister Carol was born several years after that in 1938, and then I was born in 1943. The—all of us were born—they were both born in Little Rock. I happened to be born in Oklahoma when my father was on temporary assignment there. [00:38:15] My sister Frances was a beauty contestant, and she, as I recall, was a Miss Little Rock or a Miss Little Rock runner up back in about 1953. She met Charles Kemp from Trumann, Arkansas, who became a pediatrician, and they moved to Jonesboro and lived there. She died in about 2003 of lung cancer. She'd been a smoker much of her life. But she had always wanted to be an actress, and she had taken a bus out to California and been offered a job as an actress. My father was furious [*SL laughs*] and insisted on bringing her back. And she came back. But later she went back to college at ASU in Jonesboro, got her degree, and got her equity card and acted all over the United States in repertory theaters, including at the Rep here in Little Rock. And we'd go see her in those plays whenever we could. Pete was a pediatrician. A very good one. He is still alive today. He's in his late eighties. But he was—he recruited me to the Winthrop Rockefeller campaign, and he was very active in that campaign in the 1960s to get Rockefeller elected. [00:39:45] Then my sister Carol, who's five years older than I, went to William Woods College and then to Washington University in St. Louis, where she graduated. Got a master's in political science and

went to Washington, DC. And she worked there in Washington for various lobbying firms, then she became head of Consumer Federation of America and did that for many, many years as the director of Consumer Federation of America. Testified in Washington a lot, campaigned for changes in consumer product safety issues, championed a consumer product safety commission. President Carter appointed her as an assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services, so she really focused on food safety and to this day still does work in that area, still lives in Washington. Had two children, and they're still well, and we see them frequently. The—my sister who was five years older than I went to Central High School, but I knew all of her friends growing up, and her friends became sort of my friends, although slightly separated. [00:41:07] I think one of the most significant things Carol—her name was Carol Lee Tucker. She goes only by Carol. [*Laughs*]

SL: She doesn't like the Carol Lee.

JGT: She did not like Lee. But the—she got boxing gloves, and before I got to be bigger than she was [*SL laughs*], she taught me to box. And so—and she was bigger than I was, so she whipped me all the time. [*SL laughs*] When I finally got to be her size, she retired undefeated . . .

SL: Yes.

JGT: . . . which mi . . .

SL: Interest waned.

JGT: . . . infuriated me. But my father had taught me to box as well. He had boxed back in the army in World War I, and I boxed in college. But it all came out of my father and my sister Carol. The—and that was, you know, part of a wonderful growing-up period that I had. [00:42:00] My mother, in addition to having those children and me, in 1943—times were tough, and so after I was born, she began looking for some type of work she could do. And she had heard of something called Merle Norman Cosmetics.

SL: Sure.

JGT: And she opened a Merle Norman Cosmetic Studio on 4th Street on the north side of the road across the street from what is now the Federal Office Building, but at that time was the old Peabody School.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And I would—Mother would take me to work with her when I was a small child before I went to c—to school. And I would try to help her take inventory. Later, I really did help her take inventory, and part of my growing up was learning how she kept books and learning to take inventory and understand something about the cost of the goods and the resale price and the cost of operations, and I learned that without even realizing I was learning it . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . because it was part of her repertoire. [00:43:12] There was an old Rockhouse Café next door to the clinic—the Farmere clinic building was where her office was across from Peabody. The Rockhouse Café

had incredible desserts. They had cobblers that were just out of this world, with fresh peaches and cherries and apples. And that was something I always looked forward to when I was down there. But she then—she was successful in that studio, so she opened another one in what is now the *Democrat* building just east of Main Street on 5th Street in the first block. And then she opened studios in Fordyce and Batesville . . .

SL: My gosh.

JGT: . . . and other towns and then put some in North Little Rock, and as Little Rock grew, she, in addition to her downtown studio, opened one at Park Plaza, and she had one at McCain Mall and so forth. And it was the money she was able to earn in those cosmetic franchises that enabled me to go to college. She was able to pay for my college through that. And I remember we had a dining room table that I grew up with on Stonewall Road. And I recall it not just because we ate dinner there on it but because she kept her books there. And so the table looked like little worms had crawled all over it, which were the indentations from her lead pencil . . .

SL: Oh my gosh.

JGT: . . . keeping her books on top of it. She had her adding machine, but she had the notations she'd make. And you know, it made a deep impression on me. It taught me something about—a lot about small businesses. Between two sisters and a mother who did that kind of work, the role of women was absolutely not a question for me.

Women did anything that they could do. It was not a—this was—you were not limited because you were a woman. But I grew up knowing that from a very early age. It was the nature of my household, and it took me a good bit of adjusting to understand other points of view because that was something that was—no big deal was made out of it. It was not something that I questioned or even knew to have any reason to question until there began to be a broader, national debate about it later. But my situation was already well understood. I had simply learned it as an automatic thing in my childhood.

[00:45:57] SL: You're so—you were lucky to have that. I mean, that's so rare at that time to have entrepreneurial leanings coming from women.

JGT: Well, and my mother was also very active in the women's auxiliary of the American Legion.

SL: Sure.

JGT: My father was a state commander of the American Legion at M. M. Everts Post 1. Later set up another post with a group of men, Post 334. I was a member of the Legion later. He was very happy to see me become a member of the Legion before his death. [*SL laughs*] The—but my mother is a member of the Legion Auxiliary. I would go to the Legion club with them, and I'd see all these World War II and Korean War veterans there. And they'd have lots of events. They were very, very active in those post-World War II years. Veterans activities were very common. On Memorial Day, not only would there

be poppies on everybody and people on the streets selling poppies, but there'd be parades, and it was very widely celebrated. By the time I was a grown man, you know, I went to the Veterans Cemetery, and as governor would go to the Veterans Cemetery to make remarks on Memorial Day.

SL: Yes.

[00:47:27] JGT: But it was nothing like the kind of activity that existed in the fifteen, twenty years after World War II when the memory of that war and World War I was still so strongly on everyone's mind. But I think the thing that made a particularly strong impression on me, because my mother was in the women's auxiliary, is she volunteered on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to go to Fort Roots on the top of the bluff north of Little Rock across the river where the Veterans Administration hospital was located. And the hospital there was primarily for veterans who had suffered mental . . .

SL: Trauma.

JGT: . . . injury, trauma, of some type. And the—so as a child, as a small child, I would go up there. There'd be toys that would get—were given to many of the patients there. Many of them were blind or terribly crippled or horribly disfigured, and this was evidence of war. And I saw it as a child, and I watched my mother work with these people who were so terribly injured. It made a very deep impression on me, as it would any child. And because I went up there so often, it became part of my childhood as much as the creeks where I'd go to catch

crawdads. They were just part of a very, very rich and wonderful childhood. [00:49:15] My mother finally sold her cosmetic studios and died of lung cancer also.

SL: Smoker.

JGT: In nineteen—although she never smoked.

SL: Huh.

JGT: She never smoked, and she was a—I actually take that back. She died of colon cancer, but it had . . .

SL: Metastasized.

JGT: . . . transferred to the lungs, and that's what actually killed her was the cancer in the lungs. But she died in July of 1982 and the—I had run for governor and been defeated in the primary about a month before that and joined the Mitchell law firm that same month. But anyway, she—I lost her in [19]82. She did get to see the children that are—all but one of our children, so that was good.

SL: Well, I'm getting this picture that your family growing up, your mom and dad and your grandfather and—what your sisters fell into—I'm getting this acceptance of government programs and political stances and service. I—I'm getting this strong service-oriented attitude that you were surrounded by.

JGT: Yeah, absolutely. The idea of working hard—and by working hard didn't mean I put in an eight-hour day, it meant you worked until the work was done.

SL: Was done.

[00:51:09] JGT: My father's work in Social Security not only told me something about a government program, but like my mother's work with veterans at Fort Roots, my father's work with Social Security beneficiaries—Social Security was still new to the country. Even in the 1950s . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . it's still a new thing.

SL: Evolving.

JGT: And my gosh, the fact that people actually got a monthly check when they were too old to work anymore, when they'd lost their job, was just a huge, huge deal. The importance of it to them was so grand. And so I've grown up with that kind of background, and it made a very deep impression on me and my sisters. It was part of our life.

[00:52:13] SL: So I know that you said that Social Security was a topic around the dinner table. Let's talk about the dinner table just a little bit [*slapping sound*] as you were growing up. Was your mother the cook and prepared the meals, or did y'all have help around the house or . . .

JGT: No, mother prepared the evening meals, and all of us would try to help in the kitchen. The kitchen was small.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And the—there was a dining room, and we had a little—the dining room table that mother kept her books on. [00:52:59] The—we were at 5413 Stonewall Road in the Heights. We lived a couple of other

places, but that . . .

SL: That was where . . .

JGT: . . . that was really the house I grew up in. I went to junior high—to grade school and part of junior high while I lived in that—grade school, junior high, and started high school . . .

SL: Started high school.

JGT: . . . while living in that house. It's still there. It's a little, small, red brick rent house. We tore down one garage and built a little carport while I was there. The house was very modest. It had one bathroom. It had two bedrooms and a back porch that had been converted, but we somehow all managed to fit in there. And I watched my sisters cook, and I watched my mother cook, and I helped in various ways. I'd wash dishes. I would occasionally stir something. [*SL laughs*] But generally, that kitchen was full of the . . .

SL: The women.

JGT: . . . my sisters and my mother in fixing dinner, except on Sundays when my father would cook eggs for breakfast for us. And before we went to church, my father would go take me out on the back steps. And we kept chickens. And he would catch one of the chickens and wring its neck, and by the time we got back from church, he had the chicken ready to go for us. He had cleaned it . . .

SL: Cleaned it.

JGT: . . . gutted it . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . cut it up, and either was broiling—boiling it—I'm sorry—was baking it or had fried it up for us. And so the—that kind of living was close, very intimate. [00:54:54] We had no television, but we had a radio. I listened to the radio a lot. I had a couple of friends who had the early televisions, but we never had a TV at that house. And it was an idyllic place to grow up. I remember in grade school, at Forest Park grade school, I think I recall one of our readers was called Down Cherry Lane. And of course, that was an idyllic storybook setting designed to teach children to read, and it had nice items in it, but Stonewall Road was the equivalent of Down Cherry Lane for me. World War II was over. You had the Korean War underway, and my uncle was off in the Korean War, my Uncle Jake. But it was pretty much of an idyllic setting. We played kick the can frequently as a childhood game. We'd play softball in the yards around there. One neighbor across the street was Mr. McAmis. He was head of the Game and Fish Commission. The—the2re were folks in various businesses. The country club was about ten blocks away, the Little Rock Country Club, but we did not belong to the country club. And my—couldn't have afforded it, number one. But number two, my mother had a absolute, total disdain for the county club.

SL: Why would she d . . .

JGT: This was something that she had no truck with. [*SL laughs*] She considered this people looking down their nose and acting very exclusively, and she didn't like it at all. [00:56:47] I dated a girl—

dated's too strong a word. I had a friend in school, Jane Franklin, a Jewish girl. And in—at my time, at that age, being Jewish simply did not register on me in any way. It was never identified in my household as an issue, and among the people I talked to, I didn't see it. And so many of my friends were Jewish and went to Forest Park with me. But I remember in the sixth or seventh grade, there was some kind of little school thing, a party, that was being had, and it was gonna be had at the Little Rock Country Club.

SL: Okay.

JGT: And so I called—I'd been invited, and I called Jane to see if she'd go with me. And she broke into hysterical laughter, and I couldn't figure out why—what was so funny. And she couldn't believe it, but finally, she said, "Don't you know I can't go there? I'm Jewish." And it—I said, "Well, yes." [*Laughs*] It made no impression on me at all because I was simply unaware of the—what was still a very, very strong segregation of Jews from non-Jews even in our own society here. They had their own country club, but they were not permitted up at the Little Rock Country Club at that time. And Little Rock Country Club grew up, and I think that's changed now but the—but that was the way it was. It was just as—just like blacks were segregated. I was at least aware of black segregation, but I was not aware of . . .

SL: Religious.

JGT: . . . Jewish segregation . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . until that event. And that sensitized me to it a great deal.

[00:58:41] I would go down to the—there was a Catholic seminary near our house. Still there today. But it was very active. And it had little paths that went down into the woods with a wonderful creek.

SL: Yes.

JGT: And I'd go down there with my friends, and we'd catch crawdads. And we'd take our BB guns with us, and much later I'd go down and take my .22 with me. It was an idyllic place, and it was so much fun. And we'd spend the full day in the woods. Sometimes take a sandwich with us. Try and get back in time for dinner during the summertime or on a weekend. And you know, lots of friends that have remained friends to this day. The—we had bicycles that we got around on. The roads up in that Heights area were all paved at that point. But the fresh gravel on top of fresh tar all the time, so you had to be a little careful when they were doing that. And at the intersection of what I believe is Taylor and Kavanaugh as we know it now, which was three blocks from my—it was two blocks west and one block south. A block and a half west and one block south was hardware store. And when I was very young, five, six years old, the hardware store had a hitchin' rail out front, and there were horses and buggies hitched up there and horses hitched up there that had come in from the farms and the countryside to pick up meal or feed or goods, and then they'd ride back out west.

SL: Is . . .

JGT: And that was part of my childhood right there in what we now know as the center of the Heights.

SL: So is that . . .

TM: 'Scuse me, Scott, we're gonna need to change tapes.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[01:00:30] TM: And we're good.

SL: Well, Jim Guy, you have—once again, you've survived the first hour [JGT laughs] of your Pryor Center experience and . . .

JGT: And our recollections.

SL: And you know what, you've done very, very well . . .

JGT: Well, good.

SL: . . . and it's really amazing how much you know about your family history. It's refreshing. And the stories that you've told are out of the Wild West. [Laughter] It's just—I'm so fascinated about the Parnell/Tucker relationships. I'll have to do my own homework on that. I'll spare you any more. But you know what, it's also amazing to me that, as a child, you saw a rail where horse and buggies could be tied up here in Little Rock.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: And—so maybe—I'm not sure that I'm really totally finished with wanting to know more about your mom, but maybe we should talk a little bit about Little Rock when you were growing up.

JGT: Okay.

[01:01:32] SL: As a child. Now you were talking about how you had a neighborhood and there were plenty of kids to play with . . .

JGT: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Is that the way it was?

JGT: Yep. You know, the Heights area, Stonewall Road, and Pierce, and Taylor, and all those streets, Forest Park grammar school, which is coming up on its hundredth-anniversary celebration, were all part of the neighborhood. And you know, the events that took place in those years—a boy named Bobby Russell lived across the street from me. Cadda—catty corner. And he had polio. And when polio epidemics came in those years, you know, mothers and fathers were terrified. Children were sort of terrified. We couldn't quite understand it. But there was just enormous fear of polio. And when Bobby got polio, they thought he'd die, but he ended up in an iron lung in the living room of their home. So when I'd go over to see Bobby, who was about two years older than I, I would see him in his iron lung there, breathing for him 'cause he couldn't breathe for himself, and you know, we'd played⁴ baseball and run and everything else, and here's this kid in an iron lung across the street from me. So the visual evidence of the impact of polio was everywhere. I mean you—he was not alone in having this horrible disease, and it was part of our childhood. The Salk vaccine came along and essentially eliminated polio as a childhood disease in this country and, ultimately, almost

everywhere in the world. But it was a part—one of the less attractive parts of my childhood, but it was there. [01:03:35] The opportunity to play in the neighborhood was great. The idea of anyone posing danger to a child in our neighborhood was just out of the question. Rarely saw strangers in the neighborhood. Segregation was still very much in force, but we were, at our age, were essentially oblivious to it until later when we became very much aware of it. African Americans served as maids or yard people in the area, so it wasn't quite so idyllic for them, I would say, but for young white kids, this was a seemingly idyllic existence. The Arkansas River—I mentioned we would go down to the Catholic college woods a few blocks north of my house and catch crawdads, and we'd—we all had BB guns until we were old enough to have .22s, and then we all had .22s. But the Arkansas River in those days was a—not yet dammed, so during the summer it got very, very low. And I almost walked all the way across the Arkansas River. I got within, oh, thirty yards of the north bank of the river, and the channel was there at that time, and I couldn't get across there. Now I could have if I'd put my head underwater.

SL: Right.

[01:05:14] JGT: But even as a twelve-, thirteen-, fourteen-year-old boy, I was keenly aware of some of the things floating past me when I walked across the Arkansas River because the river was used as a sewage-dumping ground up and down. And where we now have the golf course alongside of the river just down from the—what's called the

Big Dam Bridge there—there were huge piles of raw garbage that was stacked up. So when we were old enough to use our .22s, we would not only use them in the woods to shoot squirrels, we would go down in a car in the early evening, turn the lights on, or in the late afternoon, and shoot rats that were in this—these huge stacks of garbage. Now this is raw garbage dumped right there alongside the river and falling into the river. So you had the river, and it was very attractive, but this was very unattractive. And the backwater that—there was usually a stretch of dry land and then a backwater that sat between the land and the Rock Island Line railroad track that is still there. And that backwater was full of all kinds of critters. It also had a lot of pollution in it, though. So these waters that we see today are pristine compared to what I was seeing then. [01:06:47] And I have to digress to a later time in my life . . .

SL: Okay.

JGT: . . . as I tell this story. That made such a huge impact on me as a child that when we finally began not only damming the river but also paying attention to the impact on the environment of so many of our habits, I ran for and was elected prosecuting attorney for Pulaski and Perry County with the Arkansas River running right through the middle of my county. And the—as prosecutor, I recruited a group of students at Forest Park [*SL laughs*] and Forest Heights . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . to get in boats and float along the Arkansas River with a team on

shore. And the team on shore would put dye in toilets in buildings along the river and flush them and see if they could identify where the dye came out because we saw all these pipes on the Arkansas River dumping . . .

SL: Raw sewage.

JGT: Well, dumping material into the river. We took samples, the kids took samples of much of it and had it analyzed in a lab and indicated much of it was very bad. [01:08:07] The worst was when they put dye in the toilets at what was then known as the Missouri-Pacific Hospital, which sat where the Markham Street bridge . . .

SL: Okay.

JGT: . . . goes over the railroad tracks on your way downtown just up from where Dillard's is located now and the Stephens school.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: They flushed the toilets in the hospital, and the dye came straight out of a pipe out into the river just down below the hospital. So that's how bad the pollution was. So we filed a suit, a civil suit, called an in rem action, *I-N R-E-M*, an in rem action against property—against 101 pipes on the Arkansas River. And our relief requested was very simple. We couldn't tell who the owners were, so we simply asked for permission to shut the pipes down because they were fouling the river with prohibited items under an old 1800s piece of federal legislation dealing with navigable streams. And the—we quickly discovered who the owners of the pipes were. [*Laughter*]

SL: Yeah, you started pi—yeah.

JGT: And began a negotiation with them, and that's how that was resolved.
But that was a big deal at the time . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JGT: . . . to go after that. [01:09:30] But it—once more, it went back to my childhood experience of wading in that river and seeing what was in the river, of being a child shooting rats at open garbage that was dumped on the side of the river. So sometimes when we think about environmentalists arguing extreme positions, maybe in some instances there are. But it's very important for at least some of us that folks understand that we have seen the results of absolutely devastating disregard for the impact on public health and the environment in which we live and the quality of life we have and our children have over those years. And again, it goes back to my childhood experiences. But it sure was a bunch of fun to get a bunch of kids to help me do that down on the river and . . .

SL: It's so serendipitous.

JGT: . . . and bring that action.

SL: It went—comes back around.

[01:10:23] JGT: Anyway, the neighborhood was interesting. The Forest Park—I've mentioned has—is about to have their 100th centennial. Forest Heights was opened, Forest Heights Junior High School, was opened my seventh grade. So it was a brand new . . .

SL: You—brand new school.

JGT: . . . school. Y—what we now know as University Avenue was known as Hayes Street.

SL: Okay.

JGT: And Hayes was a dirt road from Cantrell, Highway 10, south all the way out to—close to where Coleman Dairy was in those years. Now the—we think of it as the Benton highway but—where Asher Avenue crosses.

SL: Yep.

JGT: The Little Rock Junior College was out there, but no UALR. That came along much later. But my sister Frances went to UAL—to Little Rock Junior College for a period of time out there, so I would occasionally be out there. But when Forest Heights was built, it was the first new junior high school in west Little Rock in ages. And it was a wonderful school. Great education. I played football and pole vaulted and was active in student affairs and really beginning to understand and enjoy school in those years. [01:11:47] The—but one of the most remarkable things was in the ninth grade—and I was on a number of school committees. I came to work a little bit early. And as I arrived at Forest Heights Junior High School, there were all of these army jeeps and stuff there at the high school—I mean at the junior high school, at Forest Heights. And there are a number of younger kids arriving, and there are some army officers standing there talking with each other and looking at the children. And they asked one of my friends, "Is this Hall High School?" [*Laughter*] And the kid said, "No,

that's two blocks west of here." Well, the soldiers went nuts. They all jumped back in their jeeps and started them and raced away. This was a part of the . . .

SL: [Nineteen] fifty-seven.

JGT: . . . Little Rock integration crisis. And troops had been sent to keep students . . .

SL: Safe.

JGT: . . . protected . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . at that time. The army troops had gone to Central High School, so we'd watched the racial crisis develop at Central High School.

[01:12:57] And my—what should have been my tenth-grade year in high school would have been at Hall High School, but they shut down—the governor of our state shut down Hall High School and Central High School rather than allow integration. I may be mistaken, but I think they shut down the black high schools in the city as well. The students had no place to go. And I was playing football at Hall. [SL sighs] And we practiced football twice a day throughout August [SL laughs] and throughout September, and a full football season was played by Hall High School and Central High School without having any school. But football was important enough to keep the teams going, and Hall and Central played against each other for the championship at the Central High School stadium. And Central beat us that year. [SL laughs] The next year when I was back at Hall and playing ball again, we won, and

then my senior year, Central beat us. But can you imagine? You shut down the public schools, but you maintain . . .

SL: Athletics keeps going.

JGT: . . . the football team.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: Many of my classmates lost high school at that point. They were from a financial situation where, once they left high school in the tenth grade, they never came back. So I have friends, you know, that I still stay in touch with that never came back to school, essentially, after the ninth grade. They had no tenth grade, and they simply went to work. The—but that made a tremendous impact on me. This was the first coming to grips with the integration crisis. [01:14:48] I went off to high school in Tampa, Florida, for that semester when my mother informed me that I would not continue to be a semi-pro high school football player. [Laughter] I went down about October the first and stayed with an aunt in Tampa, Florida, went to Hillsborough High School, and played ball, got my nose broken twice in the first week I . . .

SL: Ouch.

JGT: . . . played with these guys. They were big. But kept playing. Had good schooling, learned to love geometry, just absolutely hit it off with geometry. Algebra I did not hit it off with. Second semester, I went back to—I came back here and went to school at Harding Academy in Searcy where a number of students from Little Rock went to school,

one of whom was the little Jewish girl I mentioned, Jane Franklin. She wore her Star of David to class every day and to morning chapel at a Church of Christ school. This was a matter of considerable dismay to the principal of the school, Perry Mason. [*SL laughs*] But she wore it every day. She was a tough gal. [01:15:58] The—when the schools reopened, we had integrated schools, but very, very small number—one of the students was named Thompson, and she sat next to me in my classroom. And I remember as the black student came in the room, all the white students are sitting there waiting to see and giggling. I mean, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And it's terrible to look back on . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . but that was the reaction. And she came back—my name's Tucker, her name's Thompson.

SL: So y'all were together.

JGT: So we were sitting next to each other. And I was laughing, and the teacher scolded the heck out of us. And because she did, I thought about what I was doing, and that was the moment where this ceased to be a theoretical issue for me, and I came to grips with it at that time. And the rest of my life, I was extremely sensitized to this issue and very much aware of what a task we had to deal with. [01:17:03] But the—Hall was a wonderful high school. I played football, had a couple of car wrecks.

SL: Oh.

JGT: One I was driving I just did no damage to anybody but got my mama's car. The other was a terrible accident when one of my classmates was driving, and we were all a bit injured, but we should have all been killed in it. Just wild, crazy, student behavior, driving straight as an arrow after church on Sunday night down what is known as Reservoir Road today at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour, and we thought there was one more hill to go when in fact there was nothing but a T intersection.

SL: Oh my gosh.

[01:17:47] JGT: We—I was in the Boy Scouts during those years. Got my Eagle Scout when I was twelve.

SL: Wow.

JGT: And I was a counselor at Camp Quapaw and started that when I was twelve as well. And because I was so young, that year I worked in the health and safety at Camp Quapaw. And the fellow who was in charge of the health and safety was a man named Dent Gitchel. Dent is a lawyer here in Little Rock, has taught school, and was my—one of my legal counsel—was chief legal counsel for me for a period while I was governor. Dent also plays the guitar, so I learned to play the guitar when I was twelve sitting in the health and safety with Dent Gitchel and with a fellow named Johnny Roberts, who is . . .

SL: Johnny Roberts. I know Johnny Roberts.

JGT: . . . a terrific—and Wayland Holyfield, who later became . . .

SL: Wow.

JGT: . . . a well-known country singer. [*SL laughs*] And to this day I play the guitar and enjoy it immensely, and that was part of my childhood-shaping experience. [01:18:48] So the neighborhood was wonderful. We were seeing social changes take place in terms of racial integration. The world was becoming a bigger place. For example, when I was in high school, I believe it was my junior or senior year, we had finally moved from Stonewall Road a little further out west. And the—one morning at dawn, I heard this rumble, and I jumped out of bed—and then an explosion. Well, this is in the middle of the confrontations with the Soviet Union.

SL: Sure.

JGT: And so for a kid my age who has been grown up practicing bomb drills from grade school forward, where you duck under your desk . . .

SL: Desk.

JGT: . . . as though that's gonna protect you from an atomic weapon, that explosion had me flat out on my stomach in the kitchen. I got up when I heard it, ran out of my bedroom—a big explosion, I hit the floor, and I looked out in front of me, and my father was standing on the back porch looking up at the sky. And one of the bombers from the air force base over in Jacksonville had had a fire onboard and exploded over Little Rock . . .

SL: Wow.

JGT: . . . over west Little Rock. And—killing if not all of the crew onboard,

all but one, perhaps. But the one pilot was killed landing on the school playground at Pulaski Heights Junior High School. Engines dropped around town on houses and so forth. But seeing that plane explode across the sky reminded us that not only is an air base over there, which is for the purpose of going to war, but sometimes planes explode from enemy fire and sometimes from other causes.

[01:20:46] We were also surrounded by Titan missile bases.

SL: Yes.

JGT: And in Pine Bluff we learned that there was a national . . .

SL: Arsenal.

JGT: . . . jer—the Pine Bluff Arsenal, where chemical warfare weapons were stored. I later dealt with that as governor. The—so part of our life, while we had this idyllic situation of play and good times—I took tap dancing from Miss Fredericks. We did, you know, all sorts of fun child things. Hayrides. It was just a wonderful life. But at the same time, we were beginning to see—we had not been old enough to appreciate World War II. Korea was difficult to understand.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: We knew . . .

SL: Kind of more remote.

JGT: . . . soldiers were there, and we were fighting, and my uncle was there. But we understood about nuclear weapons after Japan. That was very much a part of—the lower atmospheric tests were conducted, aboveground tests in the United States and elsewhere. So as children

we were constantly aware of nuclear weapons and the potential of war with Russia. So that was absolutely drilled into us. And the fact we were literally surrounded by nuclear weapons for aircraft and for—and Titan missile bases was really—looking back on it, quite stunning. But it was part of this other atmosphere that was around me in those high-school years. So it was a wonderful experience with my mother's business. My father I lost not long after that. But it was great.

[01:22:44] SL: I thought about a half a dozen things while you were talking. [*Laughs*] The polio outbreak—that seems unusual to me that there was someone in your neighborhood that actually had an iron lung in their house [*TM coughs*] 'cause weren't—wasn't it was kinda the routine to ship the kids off to Booneville? Wasn't there a sanatorium there that . . .

JGT: No . . .

SL: . . . housed . . .

JGT: . . . the Booneville sanatorium was for tuberculosis patients.

SL: Okay.

JGT: To my knowledge.

SL: Okay.

JGT: There were some other medical facilities but—for example, my father went to Booneville to the TB sanatorium approximately 1951 or [19]52 because he had active tuberculosis. My sister Carol may remember, but I wanna say he was gone for a year or a year and a half. I don't think it was longer than that, but he was gone that long. And we had

a whole mountain, if you will, full of people up at the Booneville Sanatorium who had tuberculosis here in the country, and they were sent to sanatoriums and—to recover and so they would not affect—not infect people here in the community. TB was a very prevalent and very infectious disease, and you had to take public health measures, and my father was subject to that.

[01:24:14] SL: The—I—you talked about the African Americans helping in the house or helping in the yard and—what—y'all didn't really—I mean, nobody really thought about that as being anything unusual.

JGT: Absolutely not.

SL: And even the African Americans were accustomed to that. It was just part of the culture at the time. There wasn't any real animosity going on in the neighborhood that you ever saw or . . .

JGT: Not that I ever saw. Perhaps if I had lived closer downtown. The area around Central High School was a white neighborhood in those years.

SL: Sure.

JGT: Because there was no integration of the schools.

SL: Right.

JGT: After integration it slowly transitioned to a black neighborhood as white flight occurred out to Jacksonville or Cabot or what have you or west Little Rock, and only after the schools were ordered integrated and white flight was no longer an option unless you moved out of the school district did that lessen somewhat. But we didn't have the day-to-day interaction with blacks at any level other than as household

help or something. [01:25:34] Now I would occasionally get on a—
my friends and I would hop a Rock Island train that ran down beneath
the Catholic college . . .

SL: Now, when you say hop . . .

JGT: Well, I mean the train would move very slow through that area, very,
very slowly because it was coming into a . . .

SL: Metro. Yeah.

JGT: . . . busy area downtown. And it was going slowly enough that, as
kids, we could run along and grab hold of the ladder . . .

SL: Sure.

JGT: . . . on the back of the train and get up on it. And we would ride it
downtown. And we could get off as it went under a couple of locations
that were very slow downtown—what's now the River Market area.
And we would go from there up to 5th and Main. That's one of our
first stops where they had—what are they called? Krystal burgers, I
believe, *K-R-Y-S-T-A-L*. And for twenty-five cents you could get, as I
recall, four hamburgers, little—they were little hamburgers.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: But you could get four of 'em. And we would go to the movie
downtown. We'd wander around and look at the shops. And you had
some black population that was out shopping and so forth there. So
for a kid from west Little Rock, that's about the only place where we
really saw—had a direct interaction with blacks, perhaps our age or
thereabouts and adults, who were in general commerce as opposed to

a household service position.

[01:27:17] SL: We kinda just skimmed over your elementary school years.

JGT: Oh. It was just idyllic. I mean, the things I'm describing are mostly both—well, primarily elementary. I mean, junior high—some carryover into that. And high school beginning, actually, while I was in junior high, we began having these rather more adult experiences with the army here . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . and the integration crisis and the schools being shut down. But the elementary school I went to, Forest Park, was absolutely outstanding. Many of the teachers were still—oh, I remember a war widow. But they were people with wonderful educations, and they were still teaching in the public schools. And they were just terrific. The education I got in grade school, I don't think I could have had a better one anywhere. The safety of the neighborhood was not an issue. I'd run with my dog after school. You know, you could go to the woods by yourself, wander, ride, bike ride, you know, way away from the house, and you never gave it a second thought because the idea of anyone harming you was just totally, absolutely unheard of.

SL: Probably not uncommon to be able to just walk into your neighbor's home? I mean, you're think . . .

JGT: Oh, no, we never—I don't think we had a way to lock our door [*SL laughs*] on the home. We might have had a hook on the screen.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: But the doors were never locked. I never saw a key to the house we lived in on Stonewall Road.

SL: Or the car, probably.

JGT: No. We didn't leave the key in the car, I don't think, but . . .

SL: Did . . .

JGT: . . . you just—it's just not something you ever thought about.

[01:29:12] SL: Right. Right. Did—were the parents in your neighborhood—did they—I mean, I'm assuming everybody knew everybody. Everybody knew whose child you were.

JGT: Yes.

SL: There's been stories—I've heard stories where kids maybe, coming back from school, walking home from school, maybe they're doing something they shouldn't do, and by the time they got home . . .

JGT: Oh.

SL: . . . their parents knew about it.

JGT: Yeah. The—everybody, you know, sort of knew each other in the neighborhood, and if you saw children doing something they really should not be doing, it was not uncommon for parents to call other parents and say, "Listen, John was over this afternoon and did so-and-so," or "I saw him up here, and you need to be aware of such-and-such." Yeah, that was a common social occurrence. But not happening every day, but on occasion if someone was doing . . .

SL: If something rose to the level . . .

JGT: . . . something . . .

SL: . . . of concern.

JGT: . . . yeah, of notice and attention and concern, then you let folks know about it.

[01:30:20] SL: So your favorite games there in the neighborhood—did you make up your own games or . . .

JGT: We played—there was a lot of playing war, playing army.

SL: Yep.

JGT: That was common for boys, and you shot at each other, pretended to shoot at each other. As you got BB guns, you did some shooting at each other occasionally. But we played kick the can. We played softball. We played similar games to kick the can. I can't remember the name of all of them, but kick the can was a big one and the—you know, you'd have guards on it, and you'd have somebody who'd run in and kick the can.

SL: Let's talk a little bit about kick the can because I have to remind myself all the time that, you know, there'll be kids looking at this interview, and they may have no idea what kick the can is.

JGT: Well, I'm not sure I can describe it all that well, but it seems to me we were always playing it at twilight, and that may be just because it was that time of day and we were waiting to get called for dinner. Or it may be that it was because you hid and tried to run in and kick the can without being . . .

SL: Being . . .

JGT: . . . stopped by the guarding [*SL laughs*]*—*folks who were guarding the can. And you know, it was great fun to run in and kick the can [*SL laughs*] and laugh, and you'd gotten it. So that was the essence of the game. It wasn't anything very complex. We played tag football with a—and we played flag football . . .

SL: Flag football. Sure.

JGT: . . . where you'd put a towel or something in your—back of your jeans. Instead of tackling 'em, you'd pull it out, and when it pulled out, you were tackled. We played a lot of softball and you—you know, we'd play it in the street. And the—there were cars on the street, but not very often. We'd simply get out of the way when they came.

[01:32:23] SL: So late [19]40s, early [19]50s, what was Razorback football to you?

JGT: Razorback football was nothing to me at that time. I was too young. But Travelers baseball was something we paid attention to.

SL: Ah.

JGT: And my father would take me to watch baseball at Travelers Field over in Fair Park. And the—that was great fun. And you know, it was a slow, leisurely, summer—watch baseball.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And you know, the other kids were down there and adults from across the city, and this was a small town. Cars were moving slowly, and it was hot, and you had fans, and they had iced drinks and things like that. [01:33:11] Forest—Fair Park itself had a wonderful swimming

pool, outdoor swimming pool. And in the summer we'd all walk or ride the bus down there and swim. And I can remember constantly—the idea of sun cream to prevent . . .

SL: Oh.

JGT: . . . burning was just out of the question.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And so you'd get those big, big blisters . . .

SL: Blisters.

JGT: . . . from the sun. Your mothers were horrified. But we would enjoy that. There were also a lot of rides there at Fair Park, everything from merry-go-rounds to spinners and bumper cars and roller skates. Roller skating parties were very popular form of party for somebody's birthday.

SL: You bet.

JGT: There were no ice skating rinks . . .

SL: No.

JGT: . . . as there is now. All of those things were very much a part of it.

[01:34:06] The—and most of the kids had jobs, too. My first job was at Camp Quapaw the summer I was twelve. And I worked at Camp Quapaw as a counselor for several years and taught swimming there. Camp Quapaw down in Saline County. The—in subsequent summers I worked on the Pulaski County road department. My dad knew someone, and I got a job down there.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And my job was to shovel gravel onto hot . . .

SL: Tar.

JGT: . . . tar that had been laid down on the road or to cut right of way and—cause the stuck bushes would grow up alongside the road, so in the middle of the summer and, you know, it's a hundred degrees . . .

SL: Oh, man.

JGT: . . . and I've got a big sickle to cut with, and you're—the bushes were full of blackberries, so you could have a blackberry anytime you wanted to. They had some dust on 'em, but we could eat 'em.

SL: Yeah.

[01:35:10] JGT: They were also full of snakes.

SL: You bet they were.

JGT: And they were also full of wasp nests. And so a routine day—you know, it's a hundred degrees, you're chopping thorn bushes and blackberries and watching out for the snakes, and you learned to watch for 'em, and you learned to try and get out of the way of the wasp nests. But those were—there was no time limit. We worked better than twelve-hour days. I wanna say we worked fourteen-hour days. Now I was a kid. But the men I was working with, you know, they were men in their twenties and thirties and forties, but there were also men in their sixties and seventies there. Old men who are working those jobs. And they cut right of way with us, and they did some of the other stuff. But the—I got paid, as I recall, my first year was ninety cents an hour.

SL: Golly.

JGT: And I worked there for either two or two and a half years, and I think I finally got a dollar an hour, which was huge money for me.

SL: Yeah. That is . . .

JGT: And of course, I came home totally exhausted, laid down in the bathtub. But while Camp Quapaw had been a job, and I got paid for it, this was my first real sense of working for money, and I liked it. I understood the concept, and the idea of working didn't bother me, and the idea of getting paid was just terrific, thank you. I liked that a lot.

[01:36:37] SL: Let's talk a little bit about the house in your grade-school years. You mentioned it was your father that was—or your grandfather that was a part of the Reformed Latter Day Saints.

JGT: Yeah. My grandfather, Judge White, F.O. White, was a lay minister in the Reorganized . . .

SL: Reorganized.

JGT: . . . Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. That is the church that was created by the people who stayed behind in Missouri when Jo—Joseph—when the Mormon Church went west. So they should not be confused with each other. Their most fundamental tenets of Joseph Smith being guided by the angel Moroni to a hill in New York where he found the Book of Mormon inscribed and the Urim and Thummim with which he could read and interpret what was said there, and the inspired version of the bible, which is slightly different than the King James version—they shared that doctrine. But when Brigham Young

split off from that church and went west, the Mormon Church with many of its other doctrines—celestial marriage, the male/female separation, a number of other things—much different than the other church. Nonetheless, both churches were very different than Protestant religions in the country. And so my Grandfather White had been raised in that church and was a lay minister that—we had only lay ministers, by the way. I don't think we had any professional ministers in the church. And I was raised in that church by my mother. And she was very disappointed when I joined the Second Presbyterian Church much, much later. The—but it did give me some insight into the church and that split between the Reorganized Church and the Mormon Church as I came along later in life. [01:39:05] But Betty and I—Betty had been a Baptist. My father had been a Baptist, but I think I mentioned for reasons I'm not sure of, he never went to church while I was alive. The—but Betty had been in the Baptist Church. She and I were married by W. O. Vaught at Immanuel Baptist Church here in Little Rock. But we joined Second Presbyterian Church out in west Little Rock, and that's the church we've gone to the rest of our lives. Nonetheless, it was interesting to see this little church—forget what it was. It was a little country church. And there were others like it all over the state with this very different doctrine than Protestantism. And—on so many issues, yet so many similarities.

SL: Right.

JGT: But when I would go to a church summer camp, for example, you

know, everybody would go down to the lake, and you'd have a revival and everything like Protestants. No difference. Full immersion, baptism, and so forth. I was still seeing all of these country people who subscribed to this—these beliefs. And I got to know people from all over the state and the way they were living. And it wasn't something I was aware of learning, it was just something I was seeing and being a part of, and it becomes a part of your life.

[01:40:32] SL: Did—what about within the home? Was it a practice to, like, say grace at dinner and . . .

JGT: We would usually say a brief grace at dinner, but not at other meals at our house.

SL: And the—was there a Book of Mormon in the house . . .

JGT: Yes, because . . .

SL: . . . and were there lessons in the house?

JGT: . . . my mother had the books that we would take to church on Sunday. But we never did Bible readings at the house or Book of Mormon readings at the house. This—it was pretty much kept at the church. Mother played the piano at church frequently. She was a good pianist. We had a piano at the house, and both my sister Frances and my sister Carol could play the piano. Mother did not have the energy [*SL laughs*] to teach me to play the piano.

SL: The energy.

JGT: But I did learn to play the guitar later, so that was my makeup for it.

SL: Well, did the—so your mother actually taught the girls or . . .

JGT: Yes.

SL: . . . or did they . . .

JGT: No.

SL: . . . go to lessons.

JGT: My mother taught the girls. They may have had lessons as well.

[Laughs] As I say, I did take tap dance lessons. Why [laughs]—how that happened, I don't know.

[01:41:46] SL: Well, I wanna hear a little bit about that. Did you have to give recitals, tap dance recitals?

JGT: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

SL: How'd you do?

JGT: Oh, they were fine. You know, I've [SL laughs]—I remember one of them I was just horrified by in later life was "Bonga Bonga Bonga, I Don't Wanna Leave the Conga." [SL laughs] And we were all in blackface and wore grass skirts.

SL: Oh my gosh.

JGT: Can you imagine?

SL: I can . . .

JGT: But I mean . . .

SL: . . . but I'm not sure I want to.

JGT: They—yeah, that was a, you know, totally innocent . . .

SL: Of course.

JGT: . . . to those who were doing it. But that they could be that ignorant of how offensive that would be to African Americans is just stunning.

But you know, we did other things less—more—less offensive by far and—or not offensive at all. And that—you know, I learned basic tap dancing and helped me learn a little bit of music and rhythm, and I did like that. [01:42:42] I had a little trouble reading early on in school and the—I had a s—a s—not a speech teacher a—it was a woman who, in effect was giving me speech lessons.

SL: Speech pathologist?

JGT: And—no.

SL: No.

JGT: We read poetry, and I'd recite poetry aloud and memorize and recite other things. And it was great experience, and it really helped me a great deal. And she lived about three doors from Forest Park. So it—the—and I lived three blocks, three and a half blocks from Forest Park, so I could walk to grade school, and I could walk to junior high school later. It was about a mile but still a—nothing.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: Didn't think about walking a mile. Goodness.

[01:43:36] SL: Did you have a favorite teacher in grade school? Your first six grades?

JGT: Virtually all of my grade school teachers were favorite teachers. The—and to this day, Mrs. Shmuck, Mrs. Apple, Mrs. Wilson, Mrs. Tuna, Mrs. Frost—I know all of my grade-school teachers. They were absolutely wonderful teachers. And it was a great experience. I wish every child could have something so good.

[01:44:08] SL: Did you come out with a favorite class or a favorite subject matter?

JGT: No, I didn't really start focusing on things that I really liked that I can rec—well, that's not true. I must have liked English and reading. I do remember that. I liked stories, both fiction and poetry. I liked that a lot. I loved geometry when I got to that, but I really liked English and poetry in junior high as well. And then I started learning history, and I began liking history a great deal. I took Spanish in junior high. I took it in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade, and then took it in high school as well. And when I joined the marine corp, I thought we would be going to Cuba because we were dealing with . . .

SL: The crisis.

JGT: . . . Castro.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And I fully expected to—that I would go there and the Spanish would be helpful to me. And when I got to Quantico for summer training the—I noticed that none of this looked like Cuba. [*Laughter*] All of the training was focused on Southeast Asia, which is of course where my generation of folks who entered the marine corps went.

[01:45:34] SL: So did you go to college before you entered the marine corp?

JGT: No. I graduated from college in 1961.

SL: Okay.

JGT: Spring of si—or from high school the spring of [19]61. And the—I

went to—I had been admitted to Harvard. Some of my classmates had talked me into—a guy named Jim Mitchell, who'd been president of the student body, and a guy named Irving Spitzberg, whose family sponsors some things to this day downtown in the market center, had encouraged me to apply. And I was admitted. My mother, bless her, I don't know how she managed to scrape the money together to pay for the tuition up there, but she did. And I went up in the fall of [19]61 and began school. And I had been planning—I was intrigued by the marine corps, and I joined that subsequent spring, in [19]62. And the—had worked during the summer. I graduated a year early from college, so I'll come back to that. But when I first went to Quantico, I had expected to spend twelve weeks there. This was after I graduated from college. I took officer candidate training core courses in college, took several courses on military history which I enjoyed a lot, and I was a PFC in the marine corps during those years. Then I went on active duty in the marine corps in the summer of [19]64. And prior to commissioning in a physical check-up, they picked up that I had some anomalies, which later became a diagnoses of the colon cancer that I got many years later and the liver transplant that I had many years later. So that was the summer of [19]64. I took an appeal from that trying to stay on active duty, which was ultimately unsuccessful. But then I went to Vietnam as a civilian. But I was in the marine corps for about two and a half years and went to regular marine corps classes and birthday parties, marine corps birthday parties, and did very well

at Quantico and enjoyed it. And met my marine corps class on Hill 327 in Vietnam when they landed there in the spring of [19]65.

[01:48:19] SL: Well, you know, the—early on, Vietnam war was just kind of on the other side of the planet, and you know, everyone just kind of accepted that we were trying to do the right thing. It was—I think it was stopping the spread of Communism was the justification for it. Domino theory stuff.

JGT: Yes.

SL: And at that time there were still people that were volunteering for service and, I guess, by example of the greatest generation in World War II . . .

JGT: Yes.

SL: . . . and their fathers and grandfathers and—I found it—I was reading that you had joined the marines, and the health issue came up, and you couldn't go to Vietnam, and you decided to be a correspondent, and you went to Vietnam anyway. And it seems to me you would be in just as much harm way—harm's way being a war correspondent without, you know, the protection or without having a patrol with you or whatever. I—it's fascinating to me that you were ready to go, were told you couldn't go, and then you circumvented that and got over there anyway.

JGT: Yeah. Well, the—I was very disappointed not to be able to stay on active duty, and it certainly changed my life. [01:49:52] I have to back up just a little bit.

SL: Okay.

JGT: My freshman year in college, I had tried to go out for football, and I began having a great deal of s—gut discomfort. Stomach implies up here, but this was further down. And that began to be succeeded by violent diarrhea, and ultimately, in January of my freshman year at college, I began internal bleeding.

SL: Oh my gosh.

JGT: And decided that the local infirmary there at Harvard was not gonna be able to help, so I just, in the middle of the snow, went down, got on a subway and, with blood running down my legs, went down to Massachusetts General Hospital and checked myself into the emergency room, where they gave me some transfusions and put me up and diagnosed me and told me that I had a disease called ulcerative colitis. And that came and went over the years for me until I finally had cancer of the colon in 1980—and surgery for it in January of [19]89 all those years later. And they also told me at that time something they thought was true, which is that this disease is associated with another disease called sclerosing cholangitis, meaning a hardening of the bile ducts inside the liver. And at the time they thought those two diseases were twins. They are both autoimmune diseases. Having one, we now know, does not automatically mean the other, but at that time they thought they did. [01:51:38] So fortunately, my liver disease developed so slowly that they had developed liver transplantation by the time my liver died or was dying.

But it was just good fortune. Similarly, the—when they—when I had cancer in [19]89, instead of having to have a—live with a bag on my side as folks had to up to that point, they had developed ways of operating on you where you're essentially pretty normal when you got through. So I was very fortunate in the medical advances that were made. Without those medical advances, I certainly should have been dead from the liver, period. Only a liver transplant saved my life and kept me alive. And the cancer—I just had enough money to have really good medical care and always get it watched on a regular basis, and they were tracking it every moment, and the instant it became cancer, they did the surgery. So I was very fortunate on that. But that affected my college life pretty substantially. [01:52:44] I did have a job in college also. I was the—we—the proper name for it was the food man. I carried big baskets of food from the Harvard area over to Radcliffe . . .

SL: Oh.

JGT: . . . to the girls' college, and I served the dorms over there.

SL: That was fortuitous. [*Laughs*]

JGT: I made enough money moving brown bread and bagels and cream cheese over to Radcliffe that I was able to buy a car for about \$150. And the car [*laughter*] was one of the very—it was already a used car, very used, but it was a Japanese car. It had no interior finishing on it, just a tin roof inside. But it had a trunk that would perfectly hold two baskets of food. So instead of carrying one basket over in the snow

and trying to get back for a second basket, which took a lot of time, I could put both baskets in the trunk and go over to Radcliffe. And so I was doing very well on that. It also gave me more time to get home and study. The only time I really had difficulty is when I was feeling kinda high about how smart I'd been to be able to figure this out, I walked into one of the Radcliffe dorms, and instead of yelling, "Food man!" and having them come down and selling them the stuff, relying on the title of a popular song of the time, I yelled, "Candy man!"

SL: Ah.

JGT: The result was a two-week boycott of my food services where I could actu—absolutely sell nothing at Radcliffe. I was a total pariah.

SL: Why would they—why did that come about?

JGT: This was a sexist, male thing to say.

SL: Oh, I see.

JGT: And I took the lesson very clearly and well. [*Laughter*] I'm glad they taught me that in college. [01:54:36] The—but somewhere along the line, I decided I wanted to graduate from college, go ahead and get out.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: Part of it was that while I was working, and I worked every summer—one summer I worked in Washington, DC, full time and took courses at Harvard, and I was making enough money I could fly the shuttle up to Boston and take my exams and go to a few classes. But by working and taking extra classes, I was able graduate a year early. So I

entered the fall of [19]61, but I graduated in May of [19]64 and immediately went on active duty and—the summer of [19]6—came back while I was doing my appeal and worked in Win Rockefeller's campaign for governor that year. And then I got a job on a freighter called the Beaver State. And it was a freighter that plied the waters between San Francisco and Thailand and I—it was my first time on a ship, and I was a wiper. A wiper being you wipe up things. *[Laughter]* Oil and other . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . things on the vessel. And they let me come up on the bridge occasionally and survey the world. [01:55:59] I remember crossing the Bering Straits, and you had these—they let me take the helm. And I had terrible time keeping on course because if you got a little off course, having the skill to know how to bring that wheel back just . . .

SL: Correct it.

JGT: . . . far enough to get back on course—but because of the momentum of the ship, it took a long time for that rudder to have that impact. Well, they finally began laughing and took me out, and I looked back down behind the ship. And the water up there at night—the prop would stir up the phosphorescence in the water, so my trail was quite clear behind me, and it looked like a huge, long *[SL laughs]* phosphorescent snake. [01:56:44] But we stopped in Japan, so I saw the aftermath of some—World War II was still apparent in Yokohama, as I recall. I went to Pusan, Korea, over to Keelung, Formosa, to Hong

Kong, and ultimately down to Thailand. And I had an opportunity to teach there at Thammasat University. But somehow, and I don't remember exactly what happened, I came in contact with the editor of the *Bangkok World*, and he suggested that I go over to Saigon and get a job, and he called a newspaper friend of his, so I got on a plane and flew over to Saigon and started work for the—for a local, English-language daily and—*Saigon Post* was the name of it. And there were, you know, all of these journalists whose names you'd know who were there from ABC and CBS and NBC and the *New York Times* and everything else. And we, you know, we were s—there were a lot of us, but still a relatively small group. [01:57:56] I met my friend Tim Page who became a great photographer . . .

SL: Photographer.

JGT: . . . in the war, wounded three times. I was with him the first time he was wounded. He was blown over my head 'cause he wanted to run up and take a picture of us coming up the hill. But the—you had some of the newspeople there whose job was to stay, essentially, in Saigon. They were dealing with political aspects of the war or something. I was young and immortal, and so my job was always to see if I could go find some action. And some of us were very successful in finding action and the—and I was not the most successful by any stretch, but I certainly managed to learn what it was like to get shot at and the—it was instructive. And I went over as a gung ho marine. Because many of my friends worked for Bill Fulbright, I was not unaware of the

criticisms Fulbright was making, but this was still early, this was summer of [19]65, and criticisms had not yet . . .

SL: Taken hold.

JGT: . . . mounted. The—when I went back to Vietnam in 1967 to write and wrote stories about *Arkansas Men at War* of boys who were over there fighting . . .

[01:59:22] SL: You—that was a book. You kind . . .

JGT: Yeah. Yeah. Well, I put those stories into a book. But the—by the time I went back over and while I was there I bega—I was beginning to have a much different view of the complexity of the war and the dangers that I thought existed in the war. I never became an anti-war person because I also had real concerns about China. And the assumption was that if the North won, that they would become a puppet of China, offering naval bases to China and further encroachment on the positions that were important to us in Thailand and Laos. And I didn't even know Indonesia at that time. That came along much later. So I had real doubts that we could, quote—"win the war in Vietnam," and that there was—the way it was being fought I had real doubts about. This was just a massive "try and bomb 'em out of existence." But by the same token, the idea of China as an expansionist power that would encompass Vietnam was heavy on me. As we now know, Vietnam said no to China as well. And so today Vietnam has a balanced relationship with the United States that it actually looks to to help it counterbalance pressures from China, and

we're gonna see a lot of that to go in the future. [02:01:02] But anyway, the end result was I learned a lot in Vietnam in [19]65 and had good friends, particularly my friend Tim Paige, who I roomed with, and we succeeded in finding a lot of action together. I was with him, as I say, the first time he got wounded on Hill 327, where I met the drill sergeant I'd had at Quantico. He came ashore, and there I was there ahead of him. [SL laughs] And but we were going up Hill 327, and Tim went out in front of me and all of us who were coming up the hill to take pictures of people coming up the hill. And the VC were waiting for troops to show up at that point, and they dropped mortars across there, and one of them came in behind him and just lifted him up and threw him over our heads.

SL: Wow.

JGT: He rolled up, and he had smoke coming out of one hip, which was from shrapnel from the explosion, had his cameras clutched to him.

SL: [Laughs] Of course.

JGT: And he was fine. He got up, and they pulled it out and put some stitches in and bandaged him up. And we got in a helicopter later that evening and flew back to Saigon. And we had a little house we lived in together along with some other guys. And I walked past his room, and he was in talking to a friend of his at the British Embassy, a girl. And I wanna say her name was Daphne but—it—as I walked by, he was saying something like, "Daphne! Daphne! This is Tim. Can you come over? I've been wounded!" [Laughter] And of course, I threw

open the door and said, "Gotcha!" [02:02:40] And Tim came to visit me here many years later. I was practicing law. The war was still on, and I thought he was dead because . . .

SL: Hadn't heard from him.

JGT: . . . the third time he was wounded it was terrible and . . .

SL: Uh-oh.

JGT: . . . had shrapnel in his brain and everything.

SL: Oh my gosh.

JGT: I took him out to the Arkansas General Assembly, which was in session. And I was a reading clerk there, and I would read the bills to the session. And while I was doing that, Tim was enthralling all of the legislators. He's got this Cockney accent, he's from Liverpool, and he's wearing his khakis and got his crutch and—or his cane. And enthralling them with stories, and he's got his cameras, and he's back there rolling his own, and they're rolling their own [*SL laughs*], and they're all smoking cigarettes. And I get to looking at Tim, and I think, "Nah." Then I thought, "Well, maybe." So I excused myself, and I went back, and as I approached, I knew my suspicion was right. He was back there rolling a marijuana cigarette and smoking it.

SL: Oh.

JGT: And the legislators had no idea. They were all rolling their cigarettes, but they were not marijuana. [*Laughter*]

SL: Well, it's the ritual. It's the act of doing it.

JGT: So . . .

TM: Hey guys, we're gonna have to change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[02:03:59] SL: Okay. Jim Guy, I think this is our third tape. So and you're still with us. [*JGT laughs*] So, my gosh. What a prince you are to put up with all this. I can't tell you how great the stories have been so far.

JGT: Good.

SL: And really insightful stuff that we've—we don't have until now. You know, we were talking about—a little about—there's a couple of things I wanna talk about or I wanna learn more about. And I eventually want us to get back to Vietnam. But you know, you had some health issues that you discovered. But I was just wondering, were you healthy as a child? Did you have any health issues at all . . .

JGT: I had . . .

SL: . . . as a child growing up?

JGT: No, I was, you know, not only a very happy child, but I had no health issues. I broke my arm in the second grade, and that was about it. I had an appendectomy. Tonsillitis. But I—normal childhood things. I had a very healthy childhood. The—they don't know what causes the diseases that I have. Could it have been something in the environment back then? I've seen speculation on the cause of those diseases, but it is sheer speculation at this point. The doctors don't know. And they don't know how to stop them or cure them. You know, they've developed surgical solutions once they get bad enough.

If they don't—either cancer or some other disease doesn't come along with it. But no, I had a very healthy childhood. So who knows?

[02:05:40] SL: You know, of course, medicine was practiced entirely differently back when we were children. I mean, I can still remember our family doctor making house calls . . .

JGT: Yes.

SL: . . . when we were sick.

JGT: Wow.

SL: We wouldn't have to go to the clinic or to the hospital. Call up the doctor, and he'd come to the house that evening . . .

JGT: Yeah.

SL: . . . after he got off work. Did—what about the rest of your family? Did you have—were there any other—I mean, you saw the iron lung across the street.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: Which is probably one of the most dramatic devices I know of to experience.

JGT: I had a lot of classmates who had multiple sclerosis that have shown up later. And I mean, they were in my class, both in North Little Rock and then at Hall. That's the only disease I saw later in my life amongst my classmates that made me wonder because it sure seemed like the numbers that I am aware of that had it were way out of line . . .

SL: With the rest of the population.

JGT: . . . proportionately with what the population should have. But anything I—that would be sheer speculation on anything like that. So, it happens.

[02:06:52] SL: Yeah. Well, okay. Let's say we got you out of high school, and you were able to go through Harvard, by the way, which is—congratulations.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: That's one of the most well-respected schools in the world. I'm sure that—I member—I don't know if we got this on tape, but I remember you saying that you took an art history class . . .

JGT: Yeah. [*Unclear words*]

SL: . . . at Harvard, and it changed things for you.

JGT: My freshman year in—at Harvard I was required to take courses from various areas of the humanities, and I took a course on American art history. And classes were held at what's called the Fogg Art Museum. And I was absolutely captured both by the art and by the historical circumstances surrounding the art. And you couldn't study American art history without doing some study of its predecessors. So as a result of that course, that became an area of great interest and concentration for me going on throughout my life. And over the years I tried to buy paintings or copies of paintings and so forth whenever I could. My wife and I share that love, and so that's been one of the things we've enjoyed a great deal.

SL: Art history was one of—was a minor for me . . .

JGT: Oh, wonderful.

SL: . . . and so I'm—I share that enthusiasm, and I use it every day in my life.

JGT: Excellent.

SL: It just—I don't know. I'm a softie for it. I'm a sucker for good art.

JGT: I'm gonna mop my brow here, lightly.

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[02:08:41] SL: You were in the marines for a couple of years . . .

JGT: It . . .

SL: . . . is that right?

JGT: Mh-hmm.

SL: And you went to Quantico?

JGT: Yes. I joined the marines and—while I was at Harvard my first year there, the spring of my first year. I had a number other friends who were also in the marine corps. And we went to the som—what amounts to ROTC classes. They happen to been taught by marines. And went to marine corps birthday parties and other marine corps events. I had expected to go to Quantico the summer of 1962 and the summer of 1963, but I had jobs each of those summers, so I simply deferred my summer training to 1964 and went on active duty immediately after graduation in [19]64, which was a year early, so in terms of the marine corps, I was right on schedule . . .

SL: Schedule.

JGT: . . . for when they expected me to be there. And I should have gone from Quantico on to officer's basic and then some other training and off to Vietnam. But instead in August of [19]64 when we were doing the final examinations, I went through the process of being disqualified. They saw the health problems I had, began that process. I appealed that. Initial appeal was turned down. I continued the appeal for three years. By the time I finally prevailed on an appeal, I was—had been elected prosecutor. [Laughter] It had been that long. [02:10:15] But the—but in any event, when I did graduate, I decided I'd head out to Southeast Asia. I didn't know I was going to Vietnam to start with. I just thought I was headed to Southeast Asia.

SL: What was the fascination there, just . . .

JGT: Well, I think that the war was going on was part of it. And my plan for my life had been a bit interrupted all of a sudden, so I was reinvestigating it. I liked the idea of writing, and I liked the idea of teaching, and I thought I was gonna be teaching at Thammasat University. But I visited with this guy from the *Bangkok World* once I arrived in Bangkok, a big newspaper there. He recommended that I go over to Vietnam, and so I did that. Went to work for the *Saigon Post* on their staff and then became a stringer for other organizations. I—for example, I did a midnight from Saigon but six, seven a.m. in the morning in the United States newscast.

SL: Is that right?

JGT: Yeah, one of my friends, Johnny Jones, who's a doctor here in Little

Rock, John C. Jones, was in school at Vanderbilt. And he told me about driving his car one morning in Nashville and suddenly realizing there was a familiar voice on the radio from Vietnam. And [*laughter*] it was . . .

SL: Good morning, Vietnam.

JGT: . . . it was James Tucker talking to him from Saigon. [*Laughter*]

[02:11:45] SL: Wow. So—well, you—did you prefer going where the action was?

JGT: Yes. I—that was something we worked hard to do. And you know, you'd visit with various folks and have an idea of where there were operations being planned or underway or in some cases—I went on a—I remember a patrol I went on south of Da Nang where, you know, it was a pretty routine patrol, and but the VC had laid a bunch of land mines there. So several of the marines were injured, and we didn't know whether an ambush would arise from that or not. The—an incident on the DMZ where we went up to see what was happening in a fight that was ongoing at the DMZ. And there were a large number of marine—KI—killed in action there. And the marines who were survivors were upset, and the last thing they wanted to see was a bunch of reporters show up. By the same token, for those of us who were gonna go on north, they immediately started saying, "Don't do that. You do not wanna go up there." And that was because the VC really had it quite well secured. [02:13:21] The Khe Sanh, which was a cause célèbre for a long time, was a place I wanted to go see, so I

did. Spent a few dares—a few days there and we came under mortar attack while I was there so—and then we did some long patrols out in the western part of Vietnam along the Laotian/Cambodian border. And the—we had Montagnards that would go with us in that area.

Interestingly, in [19]65 when I was there the—as opposed to [19]67—in [19]65 the—there were Korean troops, and there were Chinese mercenaries they called Nungs, *N-U-N-G-S*, and we would go to—I would go to special forces camps out there where, you know, there'd be Americans, Australians, Nungs, Koreans in these old, French, triangular fortresses, and there was always some type of routine sniping actions of that type. The—and you grew accustomed to those things but—and cautious. But you know, the troops were all accustomed to it. It's—it was always interesting. We had a—this is true in any war, I think. You have these huge number of troops. Most of 'em are support troops in rural locations doing essential things and—or even in other countries in the cases of much of the air force or the naval forces. But the number of forces that are actually out engaged or seeking engagements on a regular basis are much smaller. If you're a reporter, and you want to be with those units, it's not a difficult matter to go be with 'em. So and if you're with 'em, you'll succeed in encountering a bit of hostile action while you're at it.

[02:15:26] SL: Well, what was the—so you were there in [19]64, [19]65?

JGT: I was there—I arrived in early February of 1965.

SL: Okay.

JGT: And I left in late September of [19]65 with one exception. I had to make a brief run back to the United States. But then I went back in June of 1967 and was there for three months in [19]67 before my senior year in law school.

SL: Was there a difference in the Vietnam in [19]65 as opposed to the one in [19]67?

JGT: Absolutely. Number one, there were hugely larger numbers of American troops there. They—the marines were among the first organized units of American troops to arrive in large numbers. There were already some army personnel, but the folks that showed up in Da Nang below Hill 327 in 1965 were the first big marine commitment, and that would have been roughly March of [19]65. By the time I came back in [19]67, our engagement in the war was vastly, vastly broader. So the huge numbers of troops and logistics and transport—I mean, we'd gone from a relatively modest effort to this gigantic . . .

SL: War.

JGT: . . . issue of transportation. The logistical problems were overwhelming. [02:17:07] So in [19]65 I spent time with lots of foreign troops, special forces, small numbers of troops. In [19]67 when I went back, I was generally with larger troop units in most locations. But the war itself—aside from our numbers, it was also clear that we were now engaging in the North Vietnamese Army forces, NVA forces, at least as often if not more often than the VC themselves. And of course that became more and more pronounced

over the succeeding years.

[02:17:42] SL: What about the soldiers that you—I'm gonna use the word embedded—with. Was—were the attitudes different between the two times?

JGT: I'm gonna say yes, but it's not the same soldiers.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: The ones that were there earliest that I was with were very much professionals. They were either marines, and they were, at least thought they were, absolutely delighted to be where they could have action.

SL: Ply their trade.

JGT: Yeah. Or they were special forces troops or seals or units of our armed forces that are lead elements and are routinely engaged in combat. By the time I went back in [19]67, you had huge numbers of draftees. So when I entered law school in the fall of [19]65, the number of people in my class who were there simply to avoid the draft because simply—if you were in graduate school, you were eligible not to go to war. So if you had the money, whether you intended to graduate from law school or not, if you had the money to go to law school, you could sk—avoid the draft. Needless to say, this replayed itself in lots of different ways . . .

SL: Sure.

JGT: . . . as people went to graduate schools or stayed in college to avoid going to Vietnam. But the numbers who were there in Vietnam as a

result of the draft were huge, and many of 'em were very unhappy about being there and just trying to stay alive through their twelve-, thirteen-month deployment.

[02:19:22] SL: Also that draft—it seems like I've read figures where the African American soldier became more prominent. That that draft seemed to hit African Americans the hardest and that the ethnic—or the makeup of the US forces, anyway, started tilting much more toward African Americans.

JGT: Well, the ratio of African Americans I saw in [19]67 was much higher than [19]65, there's no question about that. The *[laughs]*—interestingly—I'm gonna have to struggle to recall whether this was [19]65 or [19]67, but I was out at a army camp, and there was a heavy artillery bombardment that we were subjected to. I jumped in a hole. There was somebody else in the hole, and *[laughs]* finally let up and we both cautiously raised our head to look around—this black guy in there. And I said hello to him. And he said hello and asked me my name. Said yeah. And he said, "Where are you from?" I said, "Little Rock." And so, "Where you from?" He said, "Little Rock." *[Laughter]* And we visited further. He was a African American young man from Little Rock. He had gone to Harvard with me. We were both admitted to Harvard the same year. And I had encountered him at Harvard, but we hadn't been close there. Just a passing acquaintance. He was there reporting, also.

SL: My gosh!

JGT: But he worked for the army. [SL laughs] And he later went to work for the *Washington Post* and was a very, very prominent *Washington Post* reporter. I'm sorry I can't call his name right this moment.

SL: Well, that's all right, but gosh, what a great story.

JGT: But and I can—I'll recall it eventually, here. But I mean, that was a heck of a coincidence. But yeah, the—in [19]65 the ratio of African American troops was much smaller than I saw it in [19]67. And it's easy to understand if you had the money to go off to college . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . or graduate school or several other things, you didn't get drafted. And take plain old simple economics, and you're gonna get a much higher percentage of blacks that end up getting drafted compared to whites as a percentage of the draftees. So it was disproportionate to the percentage of the population.

[02:21:59] SL: So while you were there in both times, did you—I mean, it would seem like to me that if you're going out where fire is taking place and putting yourself—yourselves, not just you, but the troops that you were with in harm's way, that there would be some kind of bond that would happen between you and the guys that you were covering and the guys that you were . . .

JGT: Oh, yeah. I—we always—with rare exceptions, we got along great. I say rare exceptions. Sometimes when you were with a unit that had just had heavy casualties, they resented very much publicity. They didn't want to see a reporter, they didn't wanna see stories written

about their friends who'd been killed. They wanted to be left alone.
And they sure didn't want you taking pictures of what had happened.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And I did see—because I was—although I took photos, I was more of a writer than a photographer. But I saw people have—some photographers have real trouble when they were trying to take pictures of wounded or dead marines or army personnel. It—total unders—total . . .

SL: Sure.

JGT: . . . understandably.

[02:23:25] SL: Was the—so in—when you experienced fire—I mean, were you armed as a reporter? Did you . . .

JGT: The idea was not to be armed. But I managed to—I—and most of the, in my view, most of the really good reporters were not. Particularly in [19]65 I was so fresh out of the marine corps and we were in such out of the way places, I carried a firearm quite frequently. The—I never had to use it or tried to use it, but I routinely carried one.

SL: I guess I—it's just remarkable to me that anyone would want to go to Vietnam. I mean, I—it's just . . .

JGT: Well, it was full of both soldiers, marines, navy personnel, and civilians, both in press and other capacities, with Agency for International Development or other services of the government, who were there because they wanted to go.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: Yeah. And it happens in every war.

[02:24:49] SL: Were the troops in [19]67, were they aware that maybe the war wasn't—that it was becoming less and less popular?

JGT: Yes. By [19]67 you could see the beginnings of the discomfort that grew over the succeeding years, absolutely.

SL: And just you, personally, did you get a sense that this war was not gonna be winnable the second time you went?

JGT: I'd have to go back and read what I wrote close to that time but my—as I recall writing a paragraph to the effect that things are changing here, and the American people need to understand just how much they're changing and how difficult this is going to be, and they don't yet understand that.

SL: And I guess Senator Fulbright was starting to see that himself. I mean, he was . . .

JGT: Yes, he was, and he wrote a short forward to my book, my little collection of stories.

SL: I'm so . . .

JGT: But his strong opposition didn't really begin to show up till [19]68, as I recall.

[02:26:01] SL: Right. Right. He—so did you ever—I guess you never got hurt or took on a—got wounded or anything?

JGT: I got a little wound in my head from some shrapnel one day, and that was it.

SL: Well, you're a lucky, lucky man.

JGT: I felt very fortunate.

[02:26:26] SL: So when you left Vietnam, did you feel like—I guess, you know, your family and those around you had always—or had engaged in service. World War II, I, you know, Korean War, you had a uncle that went to Korea. So did you feel like you kind of understood their reluctance to talk about their war experiences or . . .

JGT: Yes, I didn't have any tr—I had not wondered at my father's reluctance to discuss World War I. I was just too young . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . and inexperienced to even think about it. But I certainly had no trouble understanding folks who did not wanna talk about it after having been there. The—and of course, I was there mostly to talk about it . . .

SL: I know.

JGT: . . . to try and explain what I saw, and try and understand what I saw. And I wish I'd done some more writing about it, but by then I was off headed towards other things. [02:27:38] And I had—in 1967, I mentioned that I had to make a brief trip back to Washington.

SL: Yeah. What was that about?

JGT: Well, while I was on active duty at Quantico, I frequently stayed with a fellow named David Lambert. David's from West Memphis. Good friend and a amazing guy. But I'd use his apartment, and he lived out on North Capitol Ave—or East Capitol Avenue, I guess it is, just right out the front door of the Capitol but about fourteen blocks down. It

was a pretty rough area of town. But I'd stay with him, and I'd take all my dirty laundry from Quantico in with me [*SL laughs*] in my car, and I'd wash it at a commercial laundromat . . .

SL: Oh, okay.

JGT: . . . that was near his house. And I washed everything. [02:28:23]
And so I was coming back from the laundromat to his apartment on a Friday night after I'd driven up from Quantico, and there were two men standing out in the middle of Capitol Avenue with—facing each other and circling each other. And as I got closer, I realized they had knives. Each of them had a knife. And I looked all around. I could see no one else. So I'm asking myself why'd I have two people all alone standing out here in the middle of the street with knives. So I had this big, wet laundry sack over my back. And I began circling around them to stay away from them. And suddenly heard footsteps behind me and got hit hard just in the back, and now there's two more people, and they've got knives, and they're all circling each other and trying to stick each other, and I start swinging my laundry bag just to keep people away from me. I hear a car approaching, and brakes being slammed on behind me, and I look up, and there's a guy in front of me who's got a pistol, and he shoots one of these guys. And I whirled around, and there's a man in the car behind me is standing out there with his pistol, and he fires it, and I think I'm dead. He has not shot me, but it turns out he is a plainclothes policeman who is seeing this fight developing, pulls up, and runs off. I said the first guy fired a

gun. That's not right. He had a knife and knifed this guy, and then the police car came up. The guy fires the gun. Well, the guy who was knifed died, so it was a murder. And they caught him eventually. And they subpoenaed me back from Vietnam . . .

SL: Wow.

JGT: . . . to testify in the murder trial of the guy who committed the murder. So one day I'm out in the boonies, and I get this subpoena from an MP [*laughs*] to come back to . . .

SL: G. James Tucker, you are served!

JGT: . . . Washington, DC, for a trial. [*Laughter*] So I came back in the middle of that summer of [19]65 to testify and then went back to Vietnam after that.

[02:30:40] SL: And David Lambert was a Fulbright staffer at that time, is that right?

JGT: Yes, that's right. That's right.

SL: He's a wonderful guy.

JGT: Yes. Yes. And he's still alive and well and doing food aid work . . .

SL: Food security.

JGT: . . . around the world.

SL: Yes. We—he gave us a whole day . . .

JGT: Yeah.

SL: . . . himself. We . . .

JGT: Wonderful. Wonderful.

SL: . . . met up at—in Washington, DC, and . . .

JGT: His brother goes to church with me.

SL: Bev?

JGT: Bev.

SL: I—he's next on my list . . .

JGT: Yeah.

SL: . . . to interview.

JGT: Good. Good.

SL: He's kind of the family historian.

JGT: Wonderful. [02:31:13] So anyway, that was that intervention. And then the summer of [19]66, I had thought—I was still not sure I wanted to stay in law school. And so in [19]66, I applied for a teaching fellowship at American University in Beirut and received it. So I worked for the Agency for International Development that summer, and then I went over to Beirut and was there for a few months, but my stomach got me while I was there. But I had the opportunity to visit Israel, so to visit Israel I flew from Beirut out to Cypress, and then from Cypress into Israel because you could not . . .

SL: Can't trav—right.

JGT: . . . travel directly. Rather than stamp my passport, they stamped a blank sheet of paper because if I had an Israeli stamp in my passport, I would not have been able to reenter Lebanon . . .

SL: Wow.

JGT: . . . or any other egypt—Saudi com—country, Palestinian country there. The—so I got a chance to have a look at Israel in the summer of

[19]66. And of course, you had a sizable war that took place not long after that.

SL: That's correct.

[02:32:35] JGT: I went back to Beirut, and while I was in Beirut, we went out and visited the Palestinian refugee camps, and I got some understanding of the Palestinian politics and the Lebanese politics. And the compromise reached by the Palestinian leadership and the Lebanese leadership was you keep these refugees in this refugee camp in order to—and in squalid conditions. In conditions of raw sewage. Just despicable conditions. You keep them there so that they will have a desire to return home. You do not let the men have jobs in the country because they may get comfortable and settle in. So the whole idea is to keep this refugee camp in a state of total demand for freedom and release. So they're angry at the Israelis for dispossessing them from their land, but they're also angry at the Israelis for keeping them in these squalid conditions, but that's really the Lebanese government's . . .

SL: Solution. Yeah.

JGT: . . . decision along with the Palestinian leadership to do that as a matter of policy to keep alive the dream of returning home. So that was an education. [02:33:55] I did get sick there, and I had to come back and return to law school and graduated in [19]68 from the law school.

SL: At Fayetteville.

JGT: At Fayetteville.

[02:34:12] SL: How did you like law school?

JGT: I wasn't sure how I would like it the first year. I worked while I was in law school.

SL: That's hard.

JGT: I had a job at Weir Skelly Station during the week and Thompson's Conoco on Sundays, so I'd go to work at Thompson's Conoco at six a.m., and I worked there till midnight. And I could study virtually all day except when the girls with the brand new, fancy cars came in to have the cars cleaned up because their boyfriends had been ill or spilled their . . .

SL: Oh my gosh.

JGT: . . . beverages in the car the preceding evening. But otherwise I could get eighteen hours of work in on one day. And then I worked down at Weir's, which was very close to the law school, for three or four hours each afternoon.

SL: I'm trying to remember where that was. Is that . . .

JGT: If you're headed north on—what is it, Maple Street there on . . .

SL: Garland?

JGT: Garland. North on Garland just before you got to the shopping center on the right, on that corner was Weir Skelly. Yeah. Thompson Conoco was over on the other highway j—in fact, almost even, almost laterally even with Weir's but all the way over on the highway. [02:35:28] So anyway, I enjoyed law school. I met some wonderful people there,

had some girlfriends that were wonderful friends and remain wonderful friends. Richard Mays. Do you know Richard . . .

SL: I know Rick Mays.

JGT: Richard and I—Richard was in law school with us. And he was, if not the only black in my class, one of the few. And so I would drive him back and forth from Little Rock sometimes, and we got to be very, very close friends, and have remained very close friends the rest of our lives. And I remained close friends with many of the folks I went to law school with. [02:36:11] Did not know where I was going to go practice law, but I interviewed at the—with a firm in Pine Bluff, the Ramsey firm, Louis Ramsey's firm.

SL: Louis Ramsey, of course.

JGT: And Bill Bridgforth down there was a friend of mine. But I was still a bachelor, and Pine Bluff was small, and the Rose Law Firm made an offer to me, so I went to work for the Rose firm as an associate.

SL: And they were highly acclaimed even then.

JGT: I'm sorry?

SL: They were highly acclaimed even then.

JGT: Oh yes. Yeah. It's the oldest law firm . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . west of the Mississippi, I think. The—but these were excellent lawyers, and I admired them greatly. And so it was a great place to get my very, very early legal training. But . . .

[02:37:00] SL: Let's circle back to law school. I mean, there's a number

of—well, first of all, I've always heard that the University of Arkansas law school is a good law school.

JGT: I found it to be a very good law school. It's hard for me to compare it with another school, but I did not feel disadvantaged in practicing law when—with the education that I received there. It was a long time before I did the kind of law practice that took me around the country, but I did not feel unprepared to do . . .

SL: Any circumstances . . .

JGT: . . . what I needed to do.

SL: Were there . . .

JGT: I felt like I'd—I felt that I'd had a very, very good education.

SL: Any . . .

TM: 'Scuse me guys. It's—it is 3:12, just to . . .

JGT: Yeah. Okay.

SL: Okay. Let's take a break.

JGT: Go on to . . .

[Tape stopped]

[02:37:47] SL: All right, we'll—you made your telephone call. We took a little break.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: You had to make a phone call, and we're still on tape three, is that right?

TM: Yes.

SL: So we're about halfway through it. We'll finish this up and—but we

left—we'd just—I started asking you about the University of Arkansas Law School.

JGT: Yes.

SL: And I've always heard that it was a good school, and you felt like you got very well prepared for your career in all aspects. That there wasn't—there hasn't been anything that's come up that you didn't feel like you could grab ahold of it and run with it. [02:38:27] Were there any—so you thought that maybe Dr. Barnhart was the dean of the law school . . .

JGT: Yes.

SL: . . . at that time. Were there any notable instructors that you had classes from or . . .

JGT: Well, I certainly remember Al Witte and Mort Gitelman and Dr. Leflar, Dr. Robert Leflar, whom I took multiple courses from. They come to my mind most immediately. But on the whole, you know, with minor exceptions, I thought all of my instructors were very good, and while we had a number of classmates who were there trying to avoid the draft . . .

SL: Yes.

JGT: . . . the—and they were pretty open about it. We also had plenty of really bright folks there. One of many examples, Tommy Sparks, whose father was once a legislator from Fordyce. I knew his father. I met Tommy there, and Tommy went on and went out to San Francisco and practiced with a big law firm called Pillsbury and did very, very

complex legal work out there. He was an excellent student, and he went to an excellent law firm. But there are lots of examples of that, and I was very pleased with the quality of it.

[02:39:47] SL: Well, you know, it takes good instructors to have a good law school, and it also—getting into—I don't know what—how it was back when you got in, but the bar was pretty high to even get into law school by the time my son went. I mean . . .

JGT: I didn't consider it that high to get in. It may be that the rush of Vietnam draft evaders increased the pressure a bit. But I didn't think it was exceptionally difficult to get in at all. There was a law-school aptitude test that was a heavy determinate and, of course, your grades in undergraduate school. But I thought it was reasonable requirements. And I had some question as to whether I ought to try to go to law school someplace else, but I had not applied until the last moment at the university. I wasn't sure what I was gonna do, and so I—anyway, I was able to show up and get in and start classes and get jobs and stuff like that. I enjoyed it. [02:40:58] I enjoyed my time in Fayetteville a lot. It was a tiny town compared to today, and the area north of it, which has developed so immensely since then, was still totally rural with very, very small towns and none of the wealth that has developed there since then.

SL: Yeah. Highway 71, two lanes . . .

JGT: Yeah. Oh yeah.

SL: . . . all the way to the border.

JGT: That's right.

[02:41:20] SL: That was it. Well, what is it about the school that—I mean, do you remember any—I would assume that the instructors really engaged with the students in order to get you to a place where you felt like you got a good degree there, and that it prepared you well for the real world. Was there—I mean, I've heard stories of question and answers and back and forth with Leflar and Witte . . .

JGT: Yeah.

SL: . . . and Gittleman and all of 'em.

JGT: Well, the classroom repartee back and forth was excellent, but that's part of the lawyer training, and it's very traditional lawyer training. You know, ask questions, give answers, have those answers cross examined, cite evidence, and ask what evidence you've got for that particular position. Make 'em carry it through to logical conclusions. That's all typical law school training. And that was typically practiced there at Fayetteville. I did not have much opportunity for non-classroom engagement with the instructors. While everybody was studying after class, only a few of us, I think, were working real jobs at the same time. And it took up a lot of time. The strongest impression I got when I came back in [19]65 was to go from a war zone that was very active to a community such as the law school at Fayetteville with such a total detachment from the war and the, you know, the girls and their big cars and the boys all going to college and trying to stay out of the war and totally disengaged with what was

happening in the war. That was a surprise. [02:43:33] Three of the guys I originally roomed with never finished law school. [Laughs] They were strictly there to try and avoid the draft, and they were successful in that. The—but I remember sitting at my breakfast table one morning reading the newspaper, and the postman knock, knock, knock, knock, knock [knocking sounds with hands] on the door real hard right next to my head, and I had just instinctively leaped across the table and on the floor with—spilling cereal everywhere and . . .

SL: Take—you took cover.

JGT: . . . my roommates wondering what in the world's going on. But that sort of thing was still in my head. Just an automatic, protective reaction. And to come to that quiet, gentle place—when I'd drive home to Little Rock, I'd drive down the Pig Trail. It's, I think, Highway—was it 7?

SL: Twenty-three.

JGT: Yeah, 23 it was called. And you know, it was all so peaceful and wonderful. So they were idyllic years. Going back in the—and you know, then I was in Lebanon that brief period in [19]66 when I could see the troubles there, and then I was back to the law school, and then I was back to Vietnam in [19]67 and back to the law school. And so I was not doing legal work in the summers. I wasn't at a law firm in the summer, I was in areas of the world that had very great disruptions, deaths of many, many people, great poverty, and mistreatment of minorities of various kinds going on. And going from

that back to the law school multiple times was an interesting experience. I was seeing totally different worlds as I went from the halls of academe to these . . .

SL: Conflict.

JGT: . . . war zones, back and forth, the conflict. But when I—but I enjoyed it. My teachers were good. [02:45:53] I got to work—I had another job, too. I was a reading clerk at the Arkansas General Assembly. So when the General Assembly was in session, I would go down and read bills at the General Assembly. And I got paid, you know, a little money for that, too. So those were things I—through all my school, both undergraduate and graduate, I was always working. And I'm very, very grateful my mother could afford to send me to college. I was glad I was able to knock a hole in that, but I was also glad I was able to work every summer as well during the school year, both in college and in graduate school.

[02:46:36] SL: All right, so you finish law school, and then you go to Beirut?

JGT: June of [19]68 I finished law school.

SL: Okay.

JGT: And went to work immediately at the Rose Law Firm. And you know, began to learn what it's really like to practice law. And the precision required in the true practice of law is vastly greater than what you do [*laughs*] at law school. But you do practice law, and you try and get better as you practice. And there was nothing remarkable in the cases

I had in the brief time that I initially practiced law. The—that was [19]68 and [19]69. [02:47:25] But in 1970 the prosecutor for Pulaski and Perry County, Dick Adkisson, announced for judge, leaving the prosecutor's office vacant, or it would be vacant. So I decided I would run for prosecuting attorney. I'm still a little puzzled as to how that happened. There was a fellow that I practiced with named Bud Brown, Robert J. Brown. And Bud was talking about running, and at some point, he said, "You know, you oughta run for this." [SL laughs] Well, my goodness, I'd had two years of law practice, [19]68 and [19]69, and there I was in the spring of 1970 running for the Democratic nomination for prosecutor, and it was asinine. I didn't have the experience to do that or the age to do it. Been practicing law for two years, and you wanna be the chief legal officer for two counties and the prosecutor. But anyway, I did. And . . .

SL: You won.

JGT: . . . won in the Democratic primary against a state legislator whose father was the Pulaski County coroner and . . .

[02:48:38] SL: Did you face a Republican opponent?

JGT: Did not have a Republican opponent so . . .

SL: That's kind of the way it used to be.

JGT: So I won the nomination. And at that time, the election was in August. That was the last election we had in the summer before we switched to spring primaries. And—but I was out and at it, and Dale Bumpers was elected that summer also so . . .

SL: From out of nowhere.

JGT: Da—that's when I met Dale is we would be out campaigning at things, and I would get to meet him. And when I took office as prosecutor, I began to grapple with public issues for the first time. And it was really a great introduction to a huge range of public policy issues.

Sometimes those offices that are down towards the bottom of the ticket grapple with day-to-day problems far more than some of the higher . . .

SL: Absolutely.

JGT: . . . offices do.

SL: Yeah, you're down on the trenches.

JGT: Yeah, very much so.

[02:49:45] SL: So—but what about the—how long was your campaign?

JGT: Well, I would have announced in probably January or Feb—I'm sorry, probably in March or April. Maybe a little bit later. Maybe as late as June.

SL: Five . . .

JGT: The election was in August, so it was three to four months long.

SL: And did you enjoy that?

JGT: Yes. I enjoyed it a lot. The—and it was a pretty combative race. The old—the folks who'd been at the courthouse for a long time were appalled that this young whippersnapper was gonna come down to the courthouse. And I was critical of many things that I was seeing at the courthouse.

SL: Sure.

[02:50:26] JGT: But anyway, they—I got along with them adequately afterwards. But some of the issues we faced were fairly substantial. The—there was a huge backlog of cases, untried cases, and I mean huge. And a major part of the reason for that, I asserted, was that the—we had no public defender system, and as a result the private attorneys who represented these clients could not afford to take them in trial without getting paid first, and so you would simply delay the trial until you got paid. And you know, that was a reasonable thing to do for the lawyers. The question is, was that a reasonable thing for public policy to do? And though that was not addressed too much in the campaign, it was one of my major efforts as prosecutor was to get a public defender system started. What we did to break the—but that took some time, but we got it done. And Judge Mackey, Frank Mackey, was the county judge, and he was very helpful in getting that done. We—recognizing the backlog, I petitioned the state supreme court to send in a group of special judges so that we could try every case that was pending as fast as we could. So they would hear no motions. They'd have no discovery hearings. All they'd do was—be to try jury trials. And so we started setting trials. And the supreme court sent in judges from all over the state to rotate. I think there were seven or eight judges they sent in to rotate through here. We got the courtroom set up, and we'd have three and four jury trials a day going on at the courthouse. [02:52:17] Well, the juries—and we

had multiple jury pools of course. The juries would listen to these cases for a couple of weeks, and the defenses all start sounding very similar. And the routines start sounding very similar. And so the jury pool became a very, very difficult pool of jurors for the defense counsel to deal with. These were educated jurors at this point. Perfectly capable of acquitting someone who had a good case, but they'd heard an awful lot of bologna during that period of time. So they were convicting—bang, bang, bang, bang. At that point, defense counsel came in and said, "Look, we know you can probably get a conviction on this, but we have to go to trial unless we can count on working out some kind of sentence that is, you know, that we think is reasonable for our client." And the policy in the past had been for the prosecutors not to recommend . . .

SL: Settlements.

JGT: . . . a sentence.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: They'd say that's up to the court. And so I took the position that no, we'll do a pretrial workup on it, and we'll make a deal with you on what we will recommend to the court, and we hope the court will honor that. But you're gonna have to plead guilty, and we'll give our recommendation, and we'll see what happens. Well, the courts were thrilled to have the prosecutor make the recommendation because they couldn't be criticized for giving a sentence that was recommended by the prosecutor. So the result was we essentially cleaned out the

backlog of cases in thirteen or fourteen months.

SL: Wow.

JGT: And I can't remember the number of cases off the top of my head anymore, but it was huge. And we simply eliminated it. And the special judges weren't having to come down very much at all by the time I left office. [02:54:08] The—we—at the same time, we had a litigation against the county jail, which was just awful. So I went down and looked at the county jail. There were some kids who'd been in the county jail for thirteen months awaiting trial.

SL: Gosh!

JGT: The jail cell they were in had no mattress on the bed because, according to the sheriff's employees who were down there, they'd tear up the mattresses. So they were sleeping on springs. Because they yelled at people out the jail windows, they'd put tin over the . . .

SL: No light.

JGT: . . . windows so there was no outside view or any sunlight in there. The—because there were so many of 'em, there was no room to put new prisoners in. It—I think in anybody's fair judgement, it was patently unconstitutional, and I immediately told the court that I believed it was patently unconstitutional and said, "Let's work out a way to solve it." Tom Eisele went down and toured the jail with me and with the public defender who helped bring the case. [02:55:22] And I got a lot of criticism at the time. I had been a founder of the American Civil Liberties Union in Arkansas when I was in law school.

SL: Well, that's a flashpoint.

JGT: Mort Gittleman, one of my instructors . . .

SL: Sure.

JGT: . . . asked me if I'd do it, and I said yes. And while I was practicing law privately, I did handle the first ACLU case in the state for a guy who was handing out antiwar literature down at Ouachita Baptist College—no, at Henderson State I guess is where it was. And he had been sentenced to some unreasonable something and banished from the county. [SL laughs] And so I represented him and took a—and sought a what's called a writ of *coram nobis*, C-O-R-A-M N-O-B-I-S, in the state supreme court to have his case heard there. And they heard it and reversed the case. And so we won our first freedom of speech case for the Civil Liberties Union, and I represented him. Now, ACLU people don't normally run for prosecutor [laughs], so . . .

SL: I was gonna say, there was a . . .

JGT: . . . there was a group of folks who didn't like this juxtaposition . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . and who were critical of my view of the county jail. But I—it was a no . . .

SL: No brainer.

JGT: There was no question about it.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And I—happy to accept the criticism on that. But at any rate, that began the process of getting a new county jail built. And Judge

Mackey was very gene—very good in working on that, and I was supportive of it. And we began building far more acceptable facilities. And we got rid of that thing. It was torn down. [02:57:06] We had the case against the pipelines on the Arkansas River, 101 pipes that were dumping various kinds of waste into the river, with the high school students who helped us identify 'em. One day a chief deputy and I went down to—someone had told me that the Capital Hotel, which was a long-standing institution . . .

SL: Sure.

JGT: . . . was doing an awful lot of business. And you know, it's only three or four blocks from the police station. And so I went over one day with my chief deputy, and he asked if we could look at their registration book. They said sure, and they turned it around. And you know, they were doing quite a business there. Rooms didn't get rented for very long. They were usually an hour or less, and the rooms were empty, and then somebody else rented them. So it was clear that there was a substantial prostitution ring going on there. Well, prostitution's close to as old as mankind anyway, so in and of itself, I was not horrified to learn that there was prostitution in the city. But to have it operating out of a major hotel two blocks from the prosecutor's office and four blocks from the police station was absolutely unacceptable. There was no way that could be operating . . .

SL: Under the nose . . .

JGT: . . . without the police department knowing it and permitting it.

SL: Right.

[02:58:31] JGT: And so I had an early confrontation with the police department on that issue and the leadership of the department, and that started us out on a very bad footing. And we had other problems after that because there were facilities that were selling liquor that had no liquor license and staying open for hours that weren't permitted. And it was not the morality or lack thereof of a particular [*unclear word*] issue so much as it was the law enforcement agencies knowingly permitting illegal acts. It compromises the police officers. And thus compromises the court system and compromises the way government oughta operate. So I did spend a good bit of my term, that two-year term, in conflict with the police or other entities as we dealt with some of these problems that other people didn't see as problems. I had to prosecute the chief of detectives of North Little Rock for running a prostitution ring—the—and he was convicted. And so that was some of the things that were happening in that two-year period. And I won't—there are more details than that on some other stuff, but they were bad things. And I was a young, still-green and still very idealistic young man, young prosecutor. But it was a great education. Just a great education.

[03:00:11] SL: Well, and also you were now in a position where you could make things happen. If you could see something that you . . .

JGT: As prosecutor within my civil or criminal jurisdiction, I could have a

real impact on public policy. And one of the things we clearly had a problem with was our criminal code. The criminal code was a mess, the state criminal code. So when I was elected attorney general—and I ran for attorney general after two years as prosecutor. Ray Thornton ran for congress and vacated the AG's office. So I ran for attorney general. Bill Thompson, a prosecutor in Fort Smith, was my opponent. I won by half of one percent. [*Laughs*] And I've got some great campaign stories, but I ran—won by half of one percent. I did have a Republican opponent in the general election there, and that was Ed Bethune. [*SL laughs*] Later went to congress and still very active in the resurgent Republican party. The—but then I became attorney general, and I won by a big margin and—60 percent. And went to—began office. [03:01:30] And one of the things we did was there was a commission formed, Arkansas Criminal Code Revision Commission. Chief Justice Harris was chairman of the procedural section. I was chairman of the substantive section. And Scott Stafford and Frank Newell . . .

SL: Scott Stafford.

JGT: . . . two of my deputies, worked heavily on that. And we wrote the—we rewrote the state criminal code and passed that code and the procedural changes and codified Arkansas's criminal law for the first time during the two terms I spent as attorney general. [00:02:07] At the same time, people were beginning to have the first sensitivity to electricity pricing. We're all so glad to have electricity, you know, just

two decades earlier, just yesterday.

SL: Right.

JGT: And suddenly, the electric companies, who were always everybody's best friend because they brought you electricity, were shocked, and I mean this literally, were shocked and affronted to have their rate calculations questioned. And so Ray Thornton had set up a consumer protection division of the attorney general's office. Many were being created around the country at that time. And we asked the legislature to pass some substantially increased consumer protection methods. And they hadn't offended anybody yet too much, so their guard was down. So we got some decent law passed and an appropriation passed where I could put some personnel there. And we began challenging utility rate increases. [03:03:13] And we had major litigation on rate increases and the White Bluff power plant. We argued that they should not put in the coal-fired generators without scrubbers for the coal that was going to go in. And they argued that using Wyoming coal, it would be clean enough that they didn't need scrubbers. And our position was "Not today, but tomorrow [*SL laughs*] you're gonna need 'em." So the case as I left it did require scrubbers to be put on the plant under certain conditions in the future. I'm not clear exactly what happened after that. But we spent a lot of time on utility litigation. There was also a—the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission was created in Washington as—to deal with some of the problems of fuel pricing that was occurring.

[03:04:09] SL: What year is this?

JGT: This is 1973, [19]74.

SL; Okay.

JGT: And the—FERC, it was called. And liquefied petroleum gas prices were going through the ceiling. And so I represented the state in challenging FERC's regulations on petroleum gas pricing. And of course, folks in the city—as one of my opponents described it, "That low pressure gas isn't a problem here anyway." [*Laughter*] He thought LPG meant low-pressure gas. But the [*SL laughs*—but out in the rural areas, they knew exactly what it was, and I got acquainted with all of the LP gas distributors out in the state and began to understand their business. And that also gave me a little bit of an education in the poultry industry at the time because they frequently needed the LP for heating in their houses. [03:05:09] So the AG's office was just a great education. I had Governor Bumpers for one term, and then Governor Pryor during my second term. So those times as prosecutor and attorney general were, you know, still wonderful for someone my age. And of course, one of the other wonderful things that happened in there is that in 1972, I met Betty.

SL: How did y'all meet?

TM: 'Scuse me, guys, we're gonna have to change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[03:05:43] SL: Jim Guy, we just changed tapes, so you're working on your fourth hour now, and I find it—you kinda lit up when you started

talking about some of the concerns you had as prosecuting attorney, and I started—it dawned on me that you were actually starting to make a difference in people's lives and the system—to make the system better. And I started thinking about your dad being Social Security guy and the entrepreneurial nature of your mom and kind of a progressive patina about your thought process. And earlier you had mentioned working on the Winthrop Rockefeller gubernatorial campaign, and I kinda just let that go. But the importance of that is is that that's a Republican candidate in a—since reconstruction—a Democratic state. So what was it—and I'm starting to get the feeling that politics was in your blood early. And you'd have to make that leap to go with a Republican and really kind of an out-of-state guy. I mean, he'd made Arkansas his home, but he was a Rockefeller . . .

JGT: Yeah.

SL: . . . and that just didn't kinda jive . . .

JGT: No.

SL: . . . with rural Arkansas and—or you would think it wouldn't.

[03:07:27] JGT: Well, the—I graduated from high school with the election of John F. Kennedy, and his assassination in [19]63, so those were very important events in my youth. And I was interested in politics a little bit in high school, but with the campaign of Kennedy and his election, I became quite interested. Now my sister, Carol, who had graduated from Washington University in St. Louis with a degree in political science, was actively working in Washington and involved in

politics by then. But Kennedy really captured my imagination, as he did so many young people. [03:08:20] And Martin Luther King was a presence out there at that point, one I was still learning about, but it was something that was figuring in my mind. My high school had been closed by political action because somebody either feared what would happen if he didn't do something like that because of his challenge from the far right. I was aware, remember, that my father—let's go back to 1920. My father had been defeated for election as auditor by the Klan candidate of the Democratic party. He was in the anti-Klan faction. So my background, slight as it was at that time, was to have very substantial doubt about those forces that gave in to things that are just clearly morally wrong. And I felt that's what had happened with the school closing. Kennedy was very attractive to me, and here it is 1964, and I'm suddenly not where I thought I would be, planning to go to the Marine Corps. And instead I'm home guiding—with an appeal on my medical discharge. [03:09:46] And my brother-in-law, Pete Kemp, Charles Kemp up in Jonesboro, tells me he wants me to go help in the Rockefeller campaign. He is actively helping. He's a doctor up there, but he's helping. And Bob Schultz, the attorney here in town, is head of Democrats for Rockefeller. He's actively helping. Tom Eisele is the campaign manager, now federal judge, and for many years a wonderful federal judge. [03:10:14] And so I went to work as director of—as Young Democrats for Rockefeller. And we set up Young Democrats for Rockefeller. And, oh, and I remember George Jernigan,

who was just terribly upset with me—and a lot of Democratic friends were. They just couldn't believe it. But I really liked what I was hearing out of Rockefeller. And I didn't feel like a Republican. But the Republicans were not the Republican party of today. And his Republicanism was one—was very progressive. It was racially progressive. It was socially progressive. And so I agreed to go to work for him and worked for, I guess, September and October and the first week of November in that campaign. Now Faibus was his opponent in that race, and Faibus won, and then I went off. But I met Rockefeller and got to know him and knew the folks around him. And I was very pleased when he was elected in 1966. And that year he was running against Justice Jim Johnson . . .

SL: Jim Johnson.

JGT: . . . who was one of the leading critics of Faibus because Faibus was not strict enough in his anti-integration policies, so I was far more actively involved in my mind against Justice Jim Johnson. But by then I was in law school, and I was not able to be as active in the campaign, but I was thrilled when Rockefeller won. The—it is—it's interesting that Justice Jim Johnson moved to the Republican party and ended up later actively aligned with Republicans in the state who have been, over the years, moving to where the old conservative wing of the Democratic party used to be. But in any event, I thought Rockefeller was a gift to the state. It broke the back of that old, right-wing portion of the Democratic party. It could've only have happened

with the help of Dale Bumpers, in my view, who then came along, and although he beat Rockefeller for a third term—nobody was supposed to get elected to a third term except Faubus. But it was against our tradition. And Bumpers took most of Faubus's—or Rockefeller's legislation that Rockefeller could not pass, and he and Richard Arnold, who was his LA, passed it—his legislative assistant. Now I was attorney general by that time. So—or by the time of his second term, I guess. [03:13:02] But at any event, somewhere in there, I had met Ann Bartley. Ann was Win's stepdaughter.

SL: Yep.

JGT: And she became a friend, and then we became very close to one another. And then went our separate ways but remained friends to this day. But as a result, I was close to Ann and to Bruce Bartley, her brother, and to Win. And you know, I had conversations with Win. I can remember sitting on the grass out in front of his house up on WinRock with him pulling crabgrass. [*Laughter*] You know, for two hours in the sun and chatting with me. And he was—it was instructive to listen to him. He was much better in personal conversations than he ever was in public speeches. But I found him to be a good man, and I was proud to have helped—to have worked for him and that he won, and I think he was very, very important to the ability of the Democratic party in the state to become a progressive party.

[03:14:15] SL: So once you got into the—well, thank you for reviewing all that. I had friends that were more engaged in the second

campaign that were Democrats that supported Win in his—did you ever know—run across a guy named Greg Simon?

JGT: It's familiar name to me but . . .

SL: Okay. All right. [*TM coughs*] Anyway, he's a good friend and college colleague of mine, and he was very involved. But once—I would say that it sounds like to me that your prosecuting attorney term was very successful, and that had to—I don't know. It had to energize you in the political arena. You felt like, you know, "I can make a difference, and I feel good about what I got done, and I'd like to move on and continue to do this." And so you decided to run for attorney general.

JGT: Decided to run for attorney general because there was suddenly a vacancy in that office as there had been for the prosecutor's office. And you know, it was a wonderful office too. The—we also just had a wide number of actions we were able to take. The attorney general has a very, very broad mandate to do things in the state under the state constitution and the state laws. Even broader today. But my predecessors as attorney general, both Joe Purcell and Ray Thornton, I feel had begun, cautiously, to make that expansion. But they—their personalities were a bit different than mine, and they were doing the very first work on it, so harder to make that . . .

SL: Sure.

JGT: . . . first push. But I feel by the time I had been elected and—not only had there been enough foundation laid that I thought I could do something, but times had changed as well. You'd also had the

assassination of Robert Kennedy, the assassination of Martin Luther King, the Vietnam War opposition had crescendoed, and the tolerance for a young officeholder wanting to change things was pretty high.

SL: Yeah.

[03:16:51] JGT: So I think I had a—was fortunate in the time at which I was elected and able to serve in that office. Probably the decision to run for Congress in 1976, you know—maybe I should have stayed as attorney general and run for governor two years later. But my gosh, if I was too young—I mean, I was thirty-three years old in 1976. I was—that's not a kid anymore, but it's still a . . .

SL: You were a young 'un.

JGT: It's still very young. And I was cochairman of the National Association of Attorneys General Consumer Protection Division, and we had the National Association of Attorney Generals winter conference here in our state. And I made friends with everyone from Walter Mondale to folks who were—AGs all over that state that are commonly known names. The . . .

SL: So you were starting to circulate . . .

JGT: Warren Rudman, for example.

SL: Who?

JGT: Warren Rudman.

SL: Oh yeah. Okay.

JGT: Later married my—the woman who was my chief secretary during all those years. She met Warren way back then [*SL laughs*], and they

got married not too many years ago, but that's—and he became Senator Rudman, of course.

SL: Of course.

JGT: But we remained good friends, and I occasionally when I'm in Washington, I'll have dinner with Warren and Margaret. But I made friends from all over the country in that race. [03:18:24] Going to—when Wilbur Mills retired unexpectedly, suddenly we had a vacant congressional office where we had had a very, very powerful congressman.

SL: Absolutely.

JGT: I had—I decided to run. I believe I had six opponents in the Democratic primary, and several of them were very, very good potential congressmembers. The—Bob McHenry and Cal Ledbetter being two examples. But at any rate, I won that without a runoff.

SL: Which was . . .

JGT: Which was . . .

SL: . . . a big thing.

JGT: . . . was very helpful, but you know, I had a lot of name recognition, so it's not all, "Gee, he's a great guy." Some of that's I—"that name looks familiar to me." [*Laughs*]

SL: Well . . .

JGT: So you can't ever disregard that, but in any event the—I went on to Washington. And I was comfortable in Washington. As attorney general, I had testified—been up there to talk to executive office

personnel on multiple occasions about federal regulations affecting the state and so forth. I'd worked there as a young man and the—I was not a stranger to Washington. But when I was working in Washington in 1963 . . .

SL: Did we talk about that?

JGT: No. No, we didn't.

SL: Well, we better talk about that now if we can.

[03:19:54] JGT: Well, the summer of [19]63 when I was working in Washington—I was working on John McClellan's patronage. And he had the Senate investigation subcommittee hearings underway. Bobby Kennedy was his chief counsel, so I met Robert Kennedy, and I watched some of those hearings, and I carried documents. And when I wasn't over tending to the door in the United States Senate, a mentally heavy chore [*SL laughs*], I was over there. But I watched Martin Luther King give his speech on the mall.

SL: "I Have a Dream."

JGT: "I Have a Dream" speech. I watched it from the back steps of the United States Capitol. There's a little . . .

SL: Sure.

JGT: . . . thing. And so I watched that speech in [19]63. It had a huge impact on me. But doing things like that, I knew Washington. My sister was working in Washington, my sister Carol. And so I felt that I knew Washington the way a young guy can or a young woman.

SL: Sure.

[03:21:01] JGT: So going there as a congressman, I was not going up as a novice. Neither was I an experienced member of Congress. But with Wilbur Mills's help, I was put on the Ways and Means Committee. So I was on that—appointed to that committee, and I chose the Social Security Subcommittee. The committee was also enlarged at the same time. The—then I was appointed to a special task force on welfare reform. And it was a multive-member committee, and we held hearings all over the country on how to make some changes in the welfare laws that then existed. So I got a rigorous education on problems in the social security system and the deficits. I sponsored one piece of legislation that was a direct amendment on the floor that I thought was very important. [*Laughs*] I got my head kicked in on it. We got thirty-three votes [*laughs*] in the House of Representatives. But it was a very serious issue. And it was this: the social security system depends upon payroll taxes, and if your payrolls fall because unemployment goes up, then the amount of money going into the Social Security trust fund is dramatically reduced.

SL: Sure.

JGT: If you've got very high levels of employment, your social security trust fund has a lot more money in it because folks are working, and they're paying payroll taxes.

SL; Right.

[03:22:35] JGT: So when, through government policies or outside events of other kinds, you have suddenly high levels of unemployment, the

deficit impact on the Social Security system is not the fault of the Social Security system. It's the fault of the high unemployment level in the country. So my suggestion was simply that when public policies failed to maintain an agreed-upon level of employment in the country, take your pick. What should it be? Three and a half, four, four and a half, five? Make a policy determination on that. But any time it goes over that, take money out of general revenue and put it into the Social Security trust fund so that the deficit in the Social Security trust fund cannot be ascribed to some evil of the Social Security system, but to the failure of rational policy on—that results in adequate employment in the country. Had we done . . .

SL: Sounds good to me.

JGT: Had we done that, we would not have solved the threats to the Social Security system, but you would have made a dramatic difference in the level of the deficit that exists. Because once that money is in there, it's earning money as it's loaned out back to the federal government. It was not my original idea. A senator named Arthur Vandenberg had suggested it back about 1953. He was a Republican. But I thought he was right.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: I modified it, and I offered it, but I got my head kicked in on it.

SL: What do you think the—what was the big opposition that you were . . .

JGT: Oh, that would have been a—you know, you're talking about spending money that [*laughs*] folks didn't wanna spend. And I said, "You've got

a commitment to spend that. Put that money into Social Security. Otherwise, you're burdening future generations with having to make up the money that was the fault of your economic policy."

SL: Well, were they borrowing money from the Social Security fund . . .

JGT: Yes.

SL: . . . then?

JGT: Even then, yes. So they—we've always borrowed . . .

SL: So . . .

[03:24:32] JGT: Borrowing from the Social Security system, since it's a guaranteed debt—the government's not gonna default on that. So I have no problem with that as long as they pay the same kind of interest that—it's the US government borrowing, so I understand why people sometimes criticize that, but I don't think that's a sound criticism. But I do think it is a sound criticism to say if you don't buy—if you allow the trust fund to run up deficits because your policies have produced high unemployment, that's the responsibility of the federal government to go to general revenue to make up. You don't try and make it up with social—with higher Social Security taxes on payroll for—either for employers or employees. You don't try to make it up by changing benefits in some other way. You say, "Look, this is a bad time for the country, and we go to general revenue for this. If debt is created, then that's fine. We create debt for highways and other things, and this is a solemn commitment." So anyway, that was something I believed in very strongly. And I followed Social Security

continuously through all that period of time. [03:25:40] The—of course, then John McClellan died, and Kaneaster Hodges was appointed to fill his seat, but we had an open seat up for election. And the—Pryor was governor at that point, and he was running and . . .

SL: He had had an unsuccessful run . . .

JGT: He had run against McClellan.

SL: . . . against McClellan.

JGT: That's correct. He had run against John McClellan . . .

SL: Very close race.

JGT: . . . in 1970, I guess it was, and had been defeated. And then he came back . . .

SL: [Nineteen] seventy-two.

JGT: . . . was elected governor in . . .

SL: Six.

JGT: . . . 1974 . . .

SL: Four. That's right.

JGT: . . . and spent [19]74 and [19]76 . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . was reelected. And then so I spent—my second term as attorney general, he was governor. My first term as congressman, he was governor. And then we were running against each other for the senate with Ray Thornton running.

SL: I remember.

[03:26:33] JGT: And you know, in retrospect, if I'd simply wanted to stay

in office, I shouldn't have run. Ray had been in office longer than I was. He was older. David had been. And I probably should have let those two guys just run against each other and stayed where I was in congress or run for governor. I might have run for governor that year, and if I had, maybe I would have been elected and Bill Clinton would have stayed in the attorney general's office where he had gone when I came in. So that was a crucial decision year. Ray and David and I each got 33 percent of the vote in the first primary. There was one other, fourth candidate that got 1 percent of the vote [*laughs*] or a little over 1 percent, and so we were all in the 33 percentile, and David and I were in the run-off. And David beat me in the run-off pretty easily. But it was, you know, I—then I thought, "Gee, I'm beat. What—now what am I gonna do?"

SL: Right.

JGT: Well, Betty and I had been—Betty I had met while I was attorney general.

[03:27:41] SL: Let's talk about your meeting Betty.

JGT: Okay.

SL: What—how did y'all meet.

JGT: I had first met her when she was having dinner with Wayne and Frances Cranford at the Little Rock Club in the old Union Life Building.

SL: Okay.

JGT: Up in—they had a little club up there.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And I was just introduced to her. And I noticed her. [*Laughs*] She had wonderful blue eyes, and she was really pretty.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

JGT: At that time, that's about all I knew about her. I had no idea how smart she was. The—we did not date for a long time after that. But when the girl I was dating and I stopped dating, and that was Ann, I thought, "Well, I'm gonna call Betty."

SL: You did. You called her.

[03:28:28] JGT: So I called Betty, and we started going out. She had two children, Lance and Kelly, from her marriage to the football player Lance Alworth.

SL: Oh yeah. I remember. Okay.

JGT: I had met Lance Alworth and—but that was about all, and it was many years before. He was out in San Diego at that time.

SL: Right.

JGT: She had been separated from Lance and then divorced from Lance. So she was divorced when I met her. And she was teaching school at Forest Park [*SL laughs*] Elementary School. Not only that, she was teaching school in my first-grade classroom, Mrs. Shmuck's room [*laughter*], where I had gone to the first grade. And that's where I proposed to her was sitting outside Mrs. Shmuck's room in my car parked in front of Forest Park. I proposed to her sitting there. [*SL laughs*] But we dated for about three years before we got married, two or three years. [03:29:36] And we then had a child in 1976,

Anna. And the next year I ran for—or that was the year I ran for congress—or I was in—went to Congress the next year, in [19]77, the year I got elected. We had the baby. Took that new baby up to Washington, DC, with us. And then came back. I got beat in [19]78. And Scott Stafford and I sat up a law firm, and we began practicing law. Betty, when she came back, decided to go to law school. So she went to law school at UALR . . .

SL: LR. Mh-hmm.

JGT: . . . and had her—our second child about six days—she likes to say about six hours after the—she passed the bar exam. [*Laughter*]
The . . .

SL: That—so she took the bar exam while she was pregnant.

JGT: Oh, very pregnant.

SL: Oh man.

JGT: I told her that she had no trouble, but that half of the people in the room with her might have failed [*laughter*] just sitting looking at her squirm.

SL: Man.

JGT: She was very pregnant at the time. I was trying a case, and I was deposing a guy over in Tulsa, Oklahoma. And my son, our son, Lance, was home with Betty. We had bought a house at 1623 Center Street. It's a block north of the Governor's Mansion.

SL: Okay.

JGT: And had remodeled it, and I mean, you know, removed rotted timbers,

redid the whole thing.

SL: The whole nine yards. Yeah.

JGT: And that's where we lived. Great house. Perfect for raising the kids. Still an area of town that was still very much in transition, but we liked it. Worked well for our heads. But Lance called me. I was at the law firm getting ready for this deposition, and I was also a partner in a law firm in Washington, DC, and I had asked them to come down and join me on it. Lance called, and I was there with one of their—with my partner from DC.

[03:31:53] SL: Now how old is Lance at this time?

JGT: This was 1980. He was a senior in high school . . .

SL: Okay.

JGT: . . . about this time.

SL: All right.

JGT: He called me and I—he'd called me several times, and the last time he called, he said, "Now." [*SL laughs*] I raced downstairs, and I was in the old Saver's building, so it was only about ten blocks to my house. Pulled up in front of the house, and Lance was standing on the front porch with an index card. And the index card was labeled, "Mother's Contractions: complete, unexpurgated, and final edition." [*Laughter*] And I looked down. They had been timing them, and I thought, "God Almighty, get her in the car!" I took her immediately to the hospital. We went from the car straight to the delivery room, and they let me go in for this delivery so I could be there, and Sarah was born. But I

mean, she was born within twenty minutes of my pulling up in the front of the hospital with Betty. [03:33:01] So now we had all four of our kids and dogs, and I was practicing law and getting over the things and in—nonetheless, I decided to get in a campaign again. So I ran for governor when Clinton got unexpectedly defeated in 1982. And got my head handed to me. Many of my voters preferred Clinton to me, and the conservative voters who voted for me but didn't think I was conservative enough voted for Joe Purcell. So that was a real crusher to get beat in that. But it did free me up to pay attention to law practice, which I did. And so I practiced law hard from then on. The Mitchell Firm approached me immediately after the primary, asked me if I'd come join them, which I did. And the—began a very good law practice there. It was a trial litigation—it was trial practice, litigation. And we litigated big cases. [03:34:17] I mentioned the deposition in Tulsa. That was for a case where I represented Arkansas-Louisiana Gas Company, which had chosen to sue the United State Geological Survey over the leasing of mineral lands for one dollar an acre. And why would you lease land for one dollar an acre? Well, it was because the land did not have any known geological structures, KGSs as they were called, on the land. If it was a KGS, then you had a high likelihood that there were oil or gas reserves in that KGS structure, a particular thing that showed up on the map. So the first thing I got to do in that was go to Washington and sit in the basement of the Geological Survey for about a month and read about geological

structures. And I read all sorts of handwritten notes from—this is— goes back to the 1800—1870, 1880, and the law we were acting under was an 1880 statute that defined KGSs. [SL laughs] And we said, "This law is right. Why did they start defining them differently? Why did they start doing something different than what they'd started out doing?" And the answer was not precisely clear, but it seemed pretty clear that what had happened is folks had been friendly with folks, and they had just started interpreting it differently. So we sued and said simply that the USGS was not following the legal definition of a known geological structure. And we had extensive preparation for it. We tried it for three days over in Fort Smith. Franklin Waters was the judge. And the—he ruled in our favor. And we struck down the method of leasing, for one dollar an acre, lands in the United States that had US—that had known geological structures on them. But we rewrote the definition of geological structures so they would use the previous definition that was intended. That was one case. It was brought by Arkla, and we were successful, but it was great fun.

[03:36:45] I represented Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Bill Woodyard, who'd been an insurance commissioner and was one of my law partners, had a big insurance regulatory practice, and in the process of that, MetLife had come to him and said the Baldwin United assets—you member Baldwin-United out of Conway?

SL: Mh-hmm.

JGT: Baldwin-United had gone bankrupt. It had started out as a little piano

company . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . and then it was acquired by a conglomerate. And among other things, it had issued huge numbers of what were called single-premium deferred annuities through its insurance division or its investment division . . .

SL: Baldwin Piano?

[03:37:26] JGT: Huh? Baldwin-United had, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And it was bankrupt. So Metropolitan Life and one hundred other life insurance companies came together, and they hired our firm. And I was the chief litigator for it—to sue in bankruptcy court to purchase these assets. And the Rose Firm represented a big collection of folks, primarily a California company that also was seeking to purchase them. And it was \$3 billion of single-premium deferred annuities, so it was a pretty good size . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . piece of litigation. So we—I spent months in New York getting ready for that, and we litigated it in Indiana and Arkansas and New York and—anyway, we ended up winning on that. So that was great fun. [03:38:17] We had a transmission case where I was hired to represent Mid South and AP&L against the Arkansas Electric co-ops. Now remember, I'd always been on the other side of AP&L and Mid South, so they had to do some adjustment to me [*laughs*], and I had

to do some adjustment to them. But we litigated over transmission rights. That went well. Then we had a very large case involving the Public Service Commission and the Clinton administration. The—Mid South and AP&L argued that, as a result of the Mississippi power plant whose costs were being forced on Arkansas rate payers, that that shouldn't have to be paid for. And so in general the idea was that let's drive AP&L to bankruptcy and have the state purchase the assets out of bankruptcy, and in doing so it can shed itself of obligations like Grand Gulf, and we can have much cheaper rates. [03:39:29] And so I was representing AP&L and Mid South, saying, "You can't do that." And they were denying doing it. And I'm restricted in what I can say about this 'cause there's a protective order that was issued at the time, but I can tell you that in the hearing before the judge in Fayetteville, the attorney for the state or for—yeah, for the PSC and the state—Vince Foster and I were up arguing. And I presented what we had to the judge and Vince, which were depositions and discovery documents. And Vince's argument to the court was, you know, "Your Honor, I know these look bad, but just because they look bad, you know, we can explain what's going on here, and this is, you know, we're just off on the wrong path." And Judge Waters leaned forward, and he said, "You know, Mr. Foster. You're right, they do look bad." Said, "In fact, they look real bad." [*SL laughs*] "I think you and Mr. Tucker need to go discuss this." [*Laughter*] And so we settled the case forty-five minutes later and entered into a confidential settlement

agreement, and that put an end to it. But it was a very, very important case and decision. That's a sample of the sorts of things I got to do while practicing law.

SL: And being out of the political arena.

JGT: And being out of the political arena. And I absolutely loved that. And in the meantime Betty and I had begun doing some other, private business on the side.

[03:41:15] SL: You know, I was gonna ask you about that. When you started looking at things to invest in and growing businesses. But you mentioned Vince Foster. It's hard for me not to just ask you—did you know Vince at all?

JGT: Oh, yes. Yes.

SL: Well, can we talk a little bit about Vince?

JGT: Yeah, I, you know, I don't know—sure.

SL: Well, I've always heard he was just a great guy.

JGT: Absolutely a great guy. Vince was absolutely a delightful man. Very, very smart. And as ethical an attorney as I ever knew. Absolutely straight down the line. So I just had the absolute highest regard. It's kind of strange, but you member my house on Stonewall Road?

SL: Yeah.

JGT: Across the street from us was a house owned by Mr. McAmis, who was at the Game and Fish Commission when I was a child. Then Vince Foster lived in that home while he was practicing at the Rose Firm. So when I'd see Vince, I was going across the street . . .

SL: Street.

JGT: . . . from my old house, and I was very fond of him and considered him a friend and a very, very good lawyer.

[03:42:30] SL: Okay. Well, I haven't ever had a ch . . .

JGT: Any of the assertions made about Vince by anybody as to either Clinton administration are non—just nonsense.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: Vince was an absolutely superb lawyer and an honest man in every way.

SL: Well, that's really all I've ever really heard . . .

JGT: Yeah.

SL: . . . about him. That he was that way. And he was a great loss.

JGT: Yeah.

[03:43:02] SL: Okay, so you just mentioned that you and your wife started looking for investments or businesses, and I guess we should talk about that too because . . .

JGT: Well . . .

SL: . . . that kinda continues today, doesn't it?

JGT: In 1982, after that senate race, I was really hurt financially. I'd lost so badly there's [*laughs*] no way anyone was gonna contribute to my campaign deficit. I had this little law firm going but—and we had some good clients, but it was slight. The—and the Mitchell Firm came to see me immediately, and at least I had that. And I had an association—I was partner in a Washington firm. But the—but I still

had significant campaign debts, and while it looked like I was gonna make money, I didn't have any money in my pocket. To make matters worse, a fellow named Pat Caviness and I had developed some—and redone numerous buildings in the downtown Quapaw area. And so we—I'd gotten fairly cocky about our ability to do that, so Buddy Benafield and I bought The Centre Place, it's called. It was in the Union Life Building between 2nd and 3rd Street on the west side of Center Street. It's a eleven-story building there just off—stands alone. And it had an historical façade on it. And there was an insurance company from North Little Rock that a state legislator owned. And they were gonna put their insurance company there, and Buddy was gonna take a floor, and I had my law practice on a floor. [03:44:44] Well, immediately after we closed, turned out that the legislator had been embellishing—embezzling from his insurance company, and the insurance company was broke, which meant we had guaranteed a very, very large loan, and our primary tenant was not there. So we were in a financial tight. Honest to goodness, we considered running a paper route in the morning to try and bring in a little extra money, and I felt like the first of the month was coming about every three days. I mean, and this is when interest rates went to 18 percent.

SL: Oh my gosh.

JGT: And so since the insurance company was gone, our mortgage rate went up, and it was a tough situation. [03:45:33] In the midst of all of this, a guy that—I represented the folks who owned Maumelle at the

time, and they were putting in a cable system. And a technician out there came to me and asked me if I'd help 'em build a cable system just outside of Maumelle. And my client said that was fine with him. So I knew absolutely nothing about cable television.

SL: Right.

JGT: Turns out this guy knew absolutely nothing, too. [*Laughter*] But bless his soul, I would never have gotten in the business.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: So we went out and put in this cable television system with an antenna, and we put the antenna up, and we bought the equipment and figured out how to make it operate. Now I was doing this at night, and Betty was sitting out at a card table in Shannon Hills just outside of Maumelle signing up customers. And the—finally we had, you know, couple of hundred customers who had signed up, which wasn't much. Thanksgiving Day came, and we turned the system on, and lo and behold, it worked. [*Laughter*] Betty and I went out to Colorado to visit friends. We came back just after Christmas Day. And we'd gotten a PO Box at the post office for mail for the business. And I went to the PO Box and opened it, and it was empty except for one slip of paper. Said, "See Postmaster." You know. So, gave it to the postmaster. He turned around and handed me a big . . .

SL: Bag.

JGT: . . . bag. I opened it up. It was full of individual envelopes. It was payments. People were buying cable television from us and sending

checks. And we had what amounted to a pretty substantial chunk of cash there. Betty and I went home, made the bank deposit, had breakfast the next morning, got in our Suburban . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . and started driving every rural road in Pulaski County and counting how many homes were on 'em and looking at the pole to see whether we could put cable in. And over the—she started managing—instead of practicing law, she started managing this cable system and taking care of all the legal issues associated with it. And we built every bit of Pulaski County where we could find an adequate number of homes per mile and where some other cable company had not already built. And at that time the big cable companies were only building the big cities.

SL: Sure.

[03:48:05] JGT: So we just simply went where they stopped, and we started building everything else. So we built pretty much everything around Little Rock and North Little Rock. We built Beebe. Then one day I was down in Texas trying a lawsuit in—just outside of Dallas. And my client, who was a guy I'd been at Camp Quapaw with [*laugh*], called me to come down. He was on the city board. And while I was down there, I mentioned our cable system. And he lived in a town called Southlake, Texas.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And he said, "We don't have any cable here. Why don't you put cable

in here in Southlake?" There weren't many homes there 'cause they didn't have a water tower yet.

SL: Right.

JGT: But he showed me that they were gonna get a water tower. So we built Southlake. And then we built the town up the road from it called Westlake. And then we bought—built part of Addison and Carrollton. And then we built a place across the street. And pretty soon we had built just about everything north of the DFW airport between Dallas and Fort Worth. And the cable market was very, very strong. And we continued to do that. We built a system in Florida. We started selling those systems. [03:49:24] And [*laughs*] then I had a call from someone who suggested I should try and buy a cable system in the United Kingdom. And I thought, "Well, Lord, I don't know anything about the United Kingdom." I can't remember the name of this guy, but he was—right now, but—a mega-millionaire who was found floating in the Mediterranean, dead. But he owned all kinds of cable franchises. And apparently, he had had major financial troubles. They needed to sell these franchises. They had franchises for part of London and all of Wales. So I started calling, and I called every day at noon to the UK or—every day to the UK trying to talk to the guy I was told controlled it. Could not get a call returned. Finally one day he calls me and says, "Okay, I've gotten your calls. We'll sell you the cable company or we'll talk to you about it, but I only have three hours." Well, he was in New York City. I was in Little Rock. So I said,

"Okay, when can we get together?" He said, "Well, can you get here this afternoon? I'm leaving tomorrow." And I said, "Let's have dinner tonight." [*Laughter*] Went out to the airport with the clothes I had on, flew to New York. We had dinner. We wrote a contract on a cloth napkin. [*SL laughs*] We got the maître d' to make a copy of it on a Xerox machine for me. I partnered with Insight Cable, and we built part of London and all of Wales. That was then taken public on the London Exchange in a merger with another company. [03:51:00] In the meantime, I'd had a call from James Riady. James had been a friend of Clinton's.

SL: Yep.

JGT: He had gone to my church, Second Presbyterian Church. And I was acquainted with him, but that was about all. But he wanted to put a cable system in Jakarta and asked if he could send a delegation over. He did. I sent Betty over to Jakarta with my chief engineer. Chief engineer looked at it and said, "This is—you won't believe this market." I said, "Well, I can't come. I'm too busy. But if y'all decide to do it, let's do it." So we decided to do it, and I was a passive investor. I was not permitted to—we were not permitted to own a corporation in Indonesia. We could only own the hard assets.

SL: Okay.

JGT: This is back 1991, [19]92. I'm lieutenant governor. I haven't become governor yet. I'm practicing law, and Betty's looking after the cable business. We invest in that company, and then the Indonesian

financial crisis hits in the late [19]90s. And I figure we've lost every dime we put into the thing.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: So I get on a plane in January of [19]98, I guess it was, and flew over—or [19]99—flew over to see if I could salvage anything.

Remember I didn't own any of the stock of the company. I only owned the hard assets. And under Indonesian law, I was able to take over all the hard assets like you would in the United States if you had a lien on the assets. And they had just changed the law so that foreigners could own corporations. So suddenly, I owned 100 percent of this cable system that had been slowly being built over there. And I partnered with the Riadys, and we put real money into it at that point, and we built all of Jakarta, all of Surabaya, which is the second-largest city in the country, and all of Bali, which is a great resort area. And that company was ultimately taken public in Hong Kong. [03:53:07] So those were our cable ventures. We had systems in Florida, Texas, Arkansas, Indonesia, Wales, and London. And we'd tried to build some in France and other places in between. We went to Egypt looking for cable systems. We looked at 'em all over the place. Jordan. But those the only places we built. And it was successful in each instance, so we were very fortunate on it.

SL: Well, do you still have interests in those?

JGT: No, I sold all those stocks back in the—earlier in the decade. The—and we began—I began some other businesses at that time, and we

can talk about them later on.

[03:53:50] SL: Okay. So. This is going on while you're lieutenant governor.

JGT: The Jakarta investment was going on while I was lieutenant governor and still practicing law. But the duties of lieutenant governor are pretty thin. But we had a governor who was running for president of the United States.

SL: Let's talk about that just for a second. So you—were you considering running for governor when Clinton was gonna . . .

JGT: I actually announced for governor.

SL: That's what I thought.

JGT: In 1990. And I did not think Clinton would run 'cause I—he was getting ready to run for president.

SL: But you know, he made that promise that he was not going to run for president . . .

JGT: Well . . .

SL: . . . right?

JGT: I've—I just remember that I didn't think he was gonna run.

SL: Right.

JGT: But in any event, I announced, and then he announced he was gonna run. And so one night, Skip Rutherford called me.

SL: Sure. Skipper.

JGT: And I was actually in bed. And I'd had my cancer surgery the year before, and I was still a little tired at this point.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: The—but he called me and said, "Listen." [*SL laughs*] "Clinton's gonna run for president." Said, "You need to run for lieutenant governor. He gonna get elected president. You'll become governor." [*Laughs*] And I said, "Yeah, yeah." But I took Skip's advice. And he was the one that suggested that to me. And I thought about it for a period of time, asked a number of people, and did that. Well, that got me out of the governor's race, which was a real thorn for Clinton, and took us off of conflicting paths.

SL: Right.

[03:55:44] JGT: And it—that should have been very easy, but the problem that was clearly gonna come up—and we had some discussion about this, Clinton and I did. Under Arkansas law, under Arkansas constitution, when the governor is not in the state of Arkansas . . .

SL: Lieutenant governor.

JGT: . . . he has no power as governor. So if we issued a bond issue while Clinton was not in the state and his signature, in facsimile or reality, appears on it with that date of issue, it's invalid if he's out of the state on that day.

SL: Right.

JGT: So the—if a—all sorts of things where the governor's name is automatically stamped on something with the date—normally no one would pay any attention to that. But this is a presidential campaign, and everything is gonna be scrutinized . . .

SL: That's right.

JGT: . . . down to the semicolon and below. And so trying to get that worked out where neither he nor I were put in an embarrassing position over that was frequently difficult. Usually the difficulties were occurring at staff level . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . where there's the sorts of jealousies . . .

SL: Yeah, sure.

JGT: . . . that existed.

SL: Protecting each other's turf.

JGT: Clinton and I actually had multiple conversations during that period of time by telephone that were very pleasant and always constructive.

You know, maybe one exception during that whole time . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . and I think that's remarkable.

[03:57:12] SL: It is. Well, okay, so he runs for governor, wins, and is it two years later that he . . .

JGT: Yes. Two . . .

SL: . . . says, "I'm gonna run."

JGT: Well, two years later, he's in the race.

SL: Right.

JGT: The—'cause when he was elected, you were just two years from the presidential election.

SL: Right.

JGT: So he was elected governor, and I was elected lieutenant governor in [19]90.

SL: Boy, you know, there both of you are, and both of you are just like the future of Arkansas politics right there. I mean, what a combination. And it's—I know some people were upset that Clinton decided to run when he, when he was running for governor, he said he was not gonna run for president, that . . .

JGT: Yeah. Well, that, you know—I clearly thought he was going to.

SL: Right.

[03:58:10] JGT: Let me put it this way: I would not have run for lieutenant governor if I had not believed very strongly that Clinton was gonna run for president . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . and I thought he had a heck of a chance of winning.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: Also, due to the cancer surgery . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . reflecting, really, on where I was in life, and I knew my liver disease was sitting there and could go south at any time.

SL: Right.

JGT: I also had a bit of a reorientation of where I wanted to be at that point. I said, "Wait a minute, Jim, I'm not where I was in age ten years ago" . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . "and I've got the liver problem. I've just beat this cancer, or we hope I have. Slow down." And so I—that was really a maturing point in my life in many ways and coming to grips with, "I'm not gonna go be president of the United States someday or something like that. I've got major health issues. I need to pay attention to what I'm doing." We had kids in college. Payin' a lot of money for that.

SL: Yep.

JGT: Kids getting ready to go to college because our—you know, Lance our—my stepson, but I raised him with Betty—is fifty-one now. And Anna—or Sarah, rather, our youngest child, is thirty. And so we have a big age . . .

SL: Spread.

JGT: . . . spread, which kept people in college and graduate school . . .

SL: Yeah. I understand.

JGT: . . . for a very long period of time. [03:59:41] The—so I—it was a good decision, and I believed he would do that. Of course, he did, in fact, decide to run. And during the process of deciding, he was gone a lot, and then during the campaign he was gone, so finally in—I wanna say the spring or summer of [19]92, when he had the nomination, clearly had the nomination, I had to move from—I had—I just decided to resign from my law firm. I had too many day-to-day conflicts where he was gone and I was making decisions on matters that affected clients of my firm . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . or could affect clients of my firm. The potentials for conflict . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . were terrible. Prior to that, on the day I became lieutenant governor, my law firm and I worked out a policy where every file I worked on—every file that anyone in the firm worked on that had a conflict with the state—might have a conflict with me serving as acting governor at any point was marked so I could not see any of those files, and no one was to discuss them with me or copy me. I mean, the firm really went out of its way to let me be lieutenant governor and to avoid conflicts of interest at the firm. And they were great at it and very serious and careful about it. [04:01:05] But by the summer of [19]92, it was clear that I was gonna be governor, acting governor, so many times that . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . that wouldn't work so—we'd already had a financial crisis involving . . .

SL: Medicaid?

JGT: . . . the way money was getting spent in the summer of [19]92 where he was out of state and there were some bills that were gonna be paid. And I had to lay off a lot of people at the Department of Human Services, as I recall, for a couple weeks to keep within the budget.

SL: Right.

JGT: There were some folks who were trying to delay billings until after the first of the fiscal year. This was not something Clinton was doing.

This was typical . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . somebody on the staff thinking they had a great idea. And I had had to fire one of his staff members who could not quite get it through her head that, under the constitution, I really had to be acting governor when he wasn't in the state. And it finally reached the point where I said, you know, "You can rehire this person if you want to, but I'm gonna rehire this person every time you're gone because I'm not putting up with that." That was the one disagreement we had, but we did resolve.

[04:02:26] SL: So she was trying to be governor, basically, is that . . .

JGT: Well, he was being governor much of the time. His staff—he'd been governor a long time. His staff knew what it was doing, and he knew what they were doing.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: But this was an extraordinary situation where you had presidential candidates and their investigative staff and everything microscopically looking at every single opportunity to find something that's being done improperly.

SL: Right.

JGT: And so it was in his interest and in my interest, both in getting him elected and in doing the right thing, to just be super careful with that. And we were. And sometimes it made for some discomfort, but it was the right thing to do, and we did it. And you know, I made a couple of

appointments that, you know, I probably could have left for him to make, and I'm still glad I made 'em, but I can imagine some of his staff being upset about that. But that was typical politicians juggling to do things that they need to do for their close friends and supporters, and so I think the folks I appointed were fine.

[04:03:41] SL: Well, did y'all talk much during the campaign?

JGT: Yes. Yeah. We talked by telephone with some frequency. I'm not sure how often, or I don't even wanna try and make an estimate of how often, but we were not out of touch. And I talked routinely to his staff and—Jim Pledger, for example, and I were very, very good friends. And Jim was director of Finance and Administration. And you know, if you're talking to DF&A, the really important stuff is primarily covered. The political staff we tried to stay in touch with and did a pretty good job. So it worked out, and we were able to work it out. It was awkward sometimes, but he was off on a presidential campaign so—but we had some real problems, and so you may recall he was elected in November but in the—but I immediately called a special session the moment he resigned. The day he resigned and I was sworn in, I called a special session of the legislature.

SL: That was in December?

[04:04:53] JGT: In December. Yeah. December of 1992. And the reason was we had a major financial shortfall in the Medicaid . . .

SL: Right.

JGT: . . . program. And interesting overtones of the old Social Security

issue I'd dealt with so many years before—we did not have a state Medicaid trust fund. We paid our Medicaid share, but we did not have a kitty that was reserved for Medicaid. So what I wanted to do was to create a Medicaid trust fund. And the question was where do you get the money to do it? And someone—we were looking around with DF&A, and I was asking them for ideas, and I don't know who came up with it, but somebody suggested a soft drink tax. So we proposed a soft drink tax and proposed that it be levied at the wholesale level rather than at the retail level, so you weren't changing the checkout cash counters, you were just doing it all on the wholesale purchases. And the—oh my goodness, the soft-drink industry, of course, just went nuts over it.

SL: Sure.

[04:06:08] JGT: But the proposal was that that money go in the Medicaid trust fund, and that it grow, and it be used to pay shortfalls when shortfalls occurred.

SL: Right.

JGT: And that's what it was designed for—pick up shortfalls. The—so you can do your regular appropriation but keep this here as a shortfall and build it and build it and build it. Well, it was a heck of a fight. The—we finally got it passed in the senate, and in the house, a legislator named Sody Arnold [*SL laughs*], so named because his family had a soft-drink company . . .

SL: Sure.

JGT: . . . from Arkadelphia—Sody proposed an amendment on the floor of the house that was a killer amendment. And it was a very simple amendment, and that is that we would also tax chocolate in the same manner. So the [*SL laughs*]*—*what do you do? Well, what we did is we visited with some legislators, and I said, "Vote yes. Approve it." And I worked with Mike Beebe and Morrill Harriman . . .

SL: Yeah.

JGT: . . . and other leaders in the senate. Senator Bell. I said, "You guys please pass this, and we will have our soda-pop tax passed. We'll have the Medicaid trust fund created. We'll be back in regular session in January, and we'll repeal the chocolate tax."

SL: Kay.

JGT: That simple.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: They said, "Fine. That works." [*Laughter*] Said, "Nobody's gonna get a chance to be mad at you 'cause we're gonna have it repealed before any election" . . .

[04:07:49] SL: Well, the repeal, though, doesn't it take more votes?

JGT: No, the repeal is . . .

SL: The same thing?

JGT: . . . is simple majority.

SL: Oh. Okay.

JGT: A simple majority of those voting.

SL: Okay. So that seems . . .

JGT: Passing a tax takes a lot of votes.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: This was a tax that was exempt from the 75-percent requirement. I just needed a simple majority vote to pass this tax.

SL: Okay.

JGT: That was one of our restrictions. If you're gonna create a track—trust fund, you'd have to do it with a tax that could be passed with a 51-percent majority instead of a 75-percent majority. And this was one of those. [04:08:22] The—so we created the trust fund, and we came back into regular session in January. And the—in the meantime, someone had started doing some calculations because it was law that we had a chocolate tax, so DF&A started calculating, you know, what would the chocolate tax produce. [JGT laughs] Well, it turned out it was gonna produce a lot of money. [Laughter] Just a huge amount of money.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: Chocolate was in everything.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: And the revenue from a chocolate tax at the wholesale level was really quite surprising. [SL laughs] And I thought, "My God. Word gets around on this, and I'm in trouble." Well, word got around. So we got into January, and I was immediately visited by a delegation of legislators [*door opening*] who did not want to repeal the chocolate tax [*laughter*] because they wanted all that revenue coming in.

SL: Well, sure.

JGT: Well, at any event, we did get it repealed, but there was a threat to it.
[Laughs] I said, "Listen, we promised we're gonna repeal it. It's gotta be gone." But that's how we—how I kicked off my first forty-five days as governor.

TM: Guys, we need to change tapes.

[Tape stopped]

[04:09:45] SL: All right, Jim Guy, we're starting tape five now, and we're talking about legislation that happened after Bill resign—is it after Bill resigned . . .

JGT: Yes.

SL: . . . is that right? And we were talking about the soda tax and the chocolate tax that got kinda tacked onto it to get it passed and how surprised you were that the chocolate tax was—chocolate's in everything, and it just raised all kinds of money.

JGT: Yeah. Would have.

SL: Would have.

JGT: The chocolate tax would have raised all kinds of money, but I had promised that . . .

SL: We'd repeal it.

JGT: . . . we were doing this strictly to end the special session, get the soda tax in place for the Medicaid trust fund, and that we would repeal the chocolate tax when we came back. So there were those who wanted to go a different direction, but we resolved that and began the other

business of a normal, regular session of the legislature. I had not spent a year getting a program ready or anything and had not just been through a gubernatorial campaign arguing for particular policies, but I did have a lot of policies in mind.

SL: Well, yeah, I can imagine you did 'cause I think you had a good eye for things that could be improved and solutions that you had in mind.

[04:11:11] JGT: Well, with the—we had passed, and I had supported it when I—and advocated it when I was lieutenant governor—a health insurance bill [*laughs*] to make health insurance available to people who could not get health insurance due to pre-existing conditions. We passed that, and as far as I know, it's still in place today. It did not have a whole lot of people who could do it because we had no way of affecting the premiums. But at least for people who were able to get the money together for a premium and who had pre-existing conditions, we were able to mandate that po—or companies had to offer that. And we looked at ways to try and improve that beginning in that regular session in January of [19]93. [04:12:07] The thing I was—had a very, very high level of concern on, though, was education. And as everyone in the legislature and most people know, education typically takes close to 50 percent of the state budget, of the state regular general revenue budget.

SL: Yes.

JGT: And it—we had one of the lowest-scoring education systems in the state, and it remained and still remains one of our greatest challenges

in trying to get kids ready for the—what they need to know in this coming century, which is so vastly different than what was true in the past, and we have that problem still today. Governor Beebe's done a wonderful job, and things are much improved, but we still have a long way to go. My concern was where do you get the money to try and do something about it? And the policy concern I had then—I have a bit today, still—is that if you don't correct the problem in the first few years of school—ideally you do it in a pre-kindergarten. But if you don't do it in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade, the gap . . .

SL: Widens.

JGT: . . . in learning and the gap in skills, particularly in basic—writing, reading, arithmetic—grow greater and greater each year thereafter, and the difficulty of closing that gap becomes more and more difficult. The teacher time required, the impact on other students of how the classroom is conducted becomes greater and greater. Very disruptive if a chunk of the class cannot keep up at all with the rest of the class. The teacher cannot ignore them. She's got to try and bring 'em along. So you hold—slow down that entire process. [04:14:10] Betty having had a master's in education in addition to her law degree and having been a teacher—I spent a lot of time talking to and . . .

SL: An authority. [*Laughs*]

JGT: . . . listening to what she had to tell me about education. But if you've got limited dollars, trying to fix this at the seventh-grade or the tenth-grade level is not something you can do. It doesn't mean you

abandon kids at that level, but you try to fix it, in my view, then and I think now, at an earlier level if you can. There's one exception that I'll talk about in a moment. And that is identify students who are not achieving at a predefined grade level, mandate a intensive, roughly six-to-one student-to-teacher ratio maximum in a summer school program that focuses on helping those kids, particularly with the most basic skills, as well as with human interaction. A lot of these kids come from homes where there's not two parents present. There may be no parent present—an abundance of social issues in the household. And that's part of what has to be dealt with in this very difficult social climate. These are not Dick and Jane on Cherry Street kids. These are kids with real deep needs, and they're complex, and they need very, very skilled teachers. [04:15:38] So we created the standards with a board of educators and parents and adults, and I asked them to create not, you know, what'll get by, but tell us, ideally, what kids should know as they finish these grades. And then, let's recognize that there's no way they're gonna know what they oughta know given where we're starting from, so pick a level that constitutes this year's goal for achievement. And hopefully, we'll be able to raise that goal for the next grade each year as we help those kids catch up. Those standards were adopted, and we implemented the program and began the mandatory summer school. The—we ran it for about three years. I left office, and I do not know what happened to it after that. Maybe it didn't work, maybe it was good, maybe it was bad, but it was

something I'd done, and my successor was a Republican and had some different views on things than I did, and so I don't know exactly what happened to it. I'm not going back to look. But I see the same problem there today. And it is a—still a very, very serious one.

[04:16:57] And I—what was not available at that time that I do think can be done now and I wish had been available then is—the president of the University of Arkansas has spoken several times about what can be done today with electronic education. That is, with computers, television—you can put the best lecturer in the world, or at least a wonderful one, on that television, on a computer, and have them be the lecturer in the class, and then have real teachers there to help 'em. But I've looked, for example, at a program that was begun by a guy out in California. But it automatically determines where the student is who is working the programs on the computer and identifies the skills that the student does not have in algebra, for example, or geometry—is able to quickly see what the kid doesn't know. This is going on at every student's desk. The computer, in effect, is a very skilled teacher watching that student try to work it and identifying the problem and immediately changes for that student, that individual student, the problems being presented to the student so he can learn, he or she can learn that problem, and then moves them to the next level.

SL: Wow.

[04:18:15] JGT: So it automatically changes the teaching level on this.

That is the sort of thing, without spending more time on it, that can be done in education today that we could not do in 1993, [19]94, [19]95. And it's a place where I'm still deeply interested in doing a little bit of work. The—but that was and remains, in my view, our principal goal. I think what's happened under Governor Beebe is wonderful. We're still just a very long way away, and it needs a lot of very dedicated work. But that was a major area of work that we made. [04:18:55]

Secondly, in colleges, I felt that the—there's a huge amount of duplication in the colleges of programs that we didn't have enough money to duplicate. I feel the same way today. Some duplication is fine because we've got a big population and it's scattered around the state. But some colleges can do better jobs than other colleges on particular subjects. And if you wanna have fifteen Universities of Arkansas, we don't have the money for it. So I held the higher education budgets flat. Said, "You guys get together, and let's talk about who can do what with the money we've got." Now, for example, how many physical education degrees do we need to give in this state? You know, let's decide how many there are. And let's decide what schools oughta be concentrating on giving physical education degrees. But we've got to be teaching languages and math and algebra and science because those are the jobs these kids are gonna need to have available. So anyway, we did an awful lot of work in that area. And it was very disruptive to hold their budgets flat for a year, but the effort was to say, "Let's just stop a minute, appraise where we are, and then

decide how we're gonna proceed." Now I left office so we didn't get to continue doing that, but that was my goal in that area. [04:20:25]

We did need a highway program in the state. I got beaten very badly on our first proposal for it, a bond issue, but under the—le—way we'd worked it out there were gonna be multiple votes on it as we worked to find the right solution. Huckabee came along behind me. He had actively opposed the highway program that I proposed, taxes and so forth. However, he then proposed a taxed highway program, and it was passed. He didn't charge the truckers as much as I was charging them, and he didn't increase the price of gasoline as much, but it's fine. He got the program passed, and he got some roads being built, which we desperately needed. [04:21:10] The—there were a variety of other issues that—in the tax area that I was disturbed by. The—we've got the income tax, and we got the sale tax in the state. At that time we had sales tax on food. But we had exempted—we had—the sales tax had not kept up with the change in commerce in the state over my lifetime. We went from commerce that was composed of, you know, fairly identifiable clothing and so forth to swimming pool cleaning and a whole range of modern services. I'm—you know, if you've got a swimming pool, surely you can afford to pay a little bit of sales tax on your swimming-pool cleaning. And that's merely one example of a huge range of services. If you've got legal services that fall above a certain level—I'm not talking about fundamental things of getting your will done or something, but once you get above a certain

level on legal services, why should that be exempt from a sales tax on services? And the money that would be produced from things like this, cumulatively, if you spread those across the board, gets to be very, very significant. And it's not increasing the income tax, and it's not putting more tax on food and so forth. So we made modest inroads on that. It was repealed after I left office, most of them were, but I think that's unfortunate. We still need the revenue sources, and perhaps even more now. There were efforts to repeal the income tax, which I was opposed to. [04:22:50] We had a larger number of Republicans than we'd had before, but I didn't have any trouble working with most of them. It was very, very easy. Crossways with one or two, but for the most part I found that they did what legislators should do. There's not a lot of things that oughta involve national political issues in a state legislature. You're coming and solving problems that are very practical problems for the people of the state, and there wasn't a lot of ideological dispute, and we were able to pass things without too much difficulty.

[04:23:29] SL: What about—seems like I read something about some of the criminal code, too. Didn't you address criminal code?

JGT: Well, as I mentioned earlier, we—well, yes, we did the—we did do a revision of the criminal code. You're correct. And I'm having trouble remembering right now what it was. The—but the—we had to . . .

SL: Well, there was something about juvenile . . .

JGT: It may have been som . . .

SL: . . . crimes and strengthening some of . . .

[04:24:05] JGT: I remember what we did. We created—yes. In looking in the area of criminal justice, we had several problems, and Chief Justice Holt was a real leader in legisla—in reform of laws and judicial reform. But we created a department of community punishment. The idea was to stop giving us a choice between putting people on parole or sending them to Cummins Penitentiary. The vast majority of crimes of which people are convicted are nonviolent offenses posing very little threat to the community.

SL: Right.

JGT: Don't send those people down to Cummins Penitentiary. By the same token, don't tell 'em, "Well, you're on parole" and send 'em out with no consequence. Utilize a variety of electronic monitoring. Incarceration at night in a facility here in the various communities, but they're out working during the day. It—utilize something that is far less expensive and keeps them away from some of the . . .

SL: Harder elements.

JGT: . . . really, harder core criminals in the penitentiary system. We did pass that, and that department is still active in the state today, and my impression is that it's—nothing's a perfect solution to this, but that it has been a significant improvement in the commu—in the criminal justice system. The—I still don't know how we solve the drug problem but the—or even make a big inroad on it, but I don't think it's just locking people up in a penitentiary.

[04:25:52] SL: Yeah, and you know what, I sense that there is a swing on that, that everyone is startin' to feel that way. I don't know if it's the generation that's—the older generation is dying out, and the hard-line thing is going away, and there's more reason why—and there's more experience in the drug culture now that have survived and didn't become horrible people.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: I—there does seem to be a more reasonable—and it's also an economic issue.

JGT: Yeah.

SL: There's a horrible economy in locking people up for nonviolent things.

JGT: It's very expensive, and we've just gone on a binge of building facilities and the cost—there're so many costs involved it's just staggering. So we can be smarter about that, and I hope we have public-policy makers who'll keep working on it. It's not something anyone says thank you for, but it's important work that needs to be done. [04:26:54] One of the things we also did in education, which was vitally important, is there—it was clear that the school funding formula that we had was not right. Some counties, some school districts, had very high school taxes. Some had very low. Some school districts had very valuable property in their district, so if you levy a property tax on it, it produced a lot of money. Some have very poor property in their district. Same property tax, very little money. So the school funding formula was an extraordinarily complex formula.

And the—we revised the school funding formula and proposed to raise the property tax throughout—for every school district in the state. So school districts that weren't charging the minimum would have a larger tax imposed on them automatically. They had to bring it up to a minimum level. And it had to be used in certain ways. You couldn't go build football stadiums with it. So we proposed that as a constitutional amendment. It was a tough fight through the legislature. Mike Beebe was my senate floor leader in getting it done along with Morrill Harriman. Very difficult to get done. We got it done, got it on the ballot. It was passed after I left by a vote of the people, but it did pass and may have required some subsequent amendments since then, some further amendments, but that was a very, very important change that we did make. [04:28:27] I was willing to concede that our school educational system was unconstitutional as it was being administered, and I wanted to eliminate a huge number of school districts. We did put in place a program that began reducing the number of school districts in the state, and that's been further reinforced since then. But in my view duplicating superintendents, duplicating financial officers, duplicating all kinds of other personnel at the administrative level made no sense at all, so I was hoping to see a system where we had, you know, 150 school districts at most, maybe as few as 75. You've still got to have some community coherence. But then within the school districts, that's fine. You could have subdistricts to do all sorts of things. But have an administrative

district that, for example, bought school buses on a bid statewide. Well, you would have thought we'd suggested removing the sun when we said you oughta bid on school buses. [*SL laughs*] They said, "Oh gosh, you can't drive the same school bus up in the hills as you do down on the—in the Delta." Said, "Of course not. You bid for different buses. But you're still putting them up for bids."

SL: Right.

JGT: "You're not doing it 'cause you're buddies with somebody."

SL: Right.

JGT: "You put school buses up for bids. This is public money. These are public dollars that are fought over very hard. Why aren't we doing statewide, public bidding for school buses?" And we would have gotten it done if I would've stayed as governor. But it was—there were a lot of fights over that sort of thing.

[04:30:05] SL: Did you—you enjoyed your time in the Governor's Mansion.

JGT: Absolutely. I was so pleased to have that job. I was able to put to work the politics I knew as well as the substantive public policy information I had learned over the years in and out of office. I knew the legislators had a pretty good feel for where they needed to go, understood the congress-state relationship. I absolutely loved the work. Just—it was an absolute delight to get up and go do it every day.

SL: Well, I can't imagine anyone that—considering all the things that you

have crossed in your lifetime up to that point, you were really qualified for the job. I mean, even when you lose a race, even in defeat, you learn stuff, and maybe one of the things you learn in defeat is you learn to listen a little more closely and . . .

JGT: Sometimes especially in defeat, you're learning things. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. And but the—you still had the resilience to still—and the passion to still wanna be a part of it, and so I think we were lucky to have you as long as we had you. [04:31:25] Now you know, you—we keep alluding to the—you keep alluding to the idea that you left the Governor's Mansion, and you didn't get to finish up on the legislation and all the things that you wanted to do. And I don't know if you wanna talk about how that came about or not, but it seems so ironic to me that before you became—before—back when Bill Clinton was running for the presidency and it became apparent that he was gonna be under a microscope, and we really needed to do things correctly, and it couldn't be, you know, outside the realm of the way the state's constitution was. You really needed to be in charge 'cause he was not present. And so you guys worked that out, and it worked, and everything was good. But it's so ironic to me that that microscope just kept on, kept on, and there was such an angry element about Bill Clinton being elected.

[04:32:30] JGT: Oh. This—the criminal prosecutions were directed very simply, and it was explained very clearly that if I could simply remember something about Bill Clinton, then that would solve the

problem. The—what they're asking me to remember never happened, but it was something that David Hale had asserted had happened that was just false. The—so I had nothing to offer, and I was unwilling to invent it for their purposes.

[04:33:11] SL: Well, you look fabulous. I, you know, I know the liver transplant's a huge thing, and it's complicated and fraught with many dangers. And I know—I also know that they don't hand those out ver—just—I mean, you have to be in pretty good health to . . .

JGT: Well if you're not gonna die, you don't get one.

SL: Right.

JGT: And so I was on my way to death and, you know, would've been gone in a few months had I not had the transplant. They—had it on Christmas day of 1996. And I can't help but think of the young man who died Christmas Eve whose liver I got.

SL: Yeah.

JGT: So there's always a sad side to a transplant like that because somebody passed for you to be able to live. But I'm very, very grateful for the time I've had practicing law and public office. I've gotten to enjoy grandchildren that I never would've met had I not had that transplant. Would've missed that.

[04:34:11] SL: You know, we should probably talk a little bit about your family. Now what were the—what are your children's names?

JGT: Lance and Kelly are my step-children that I've raised since they were quite young, Betty's children with Lance Alworth. And then Anna and

Sarah are our two children. Lance is an attorney with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Kelly has a law degree, but she's been raising her three children out in San Diego. She married a man she met while she was at Columbia.

SL: Okay.

JGT: Lance went to Harvard undergraduate and went to the university law school. Then Anna went to Wellesley, and she has a knack for languages, so she went to China.

SL: Oh my gosh.

JGT: And is fluent in written and spoken Mandarin. Got a master's in Chinese out at Colorado and worked for the defense intelligence administration and worked for the Chamber of Commerce and worked briefly for AEDC here in Arkansas, very briefly. She and her husband were divorced. And she works for the joint congressional commission on strategic trade with China now and goes to law school part time. She's almost finished Georgetown Law school. [04:35:31] Sarah, our youngest daughter, went to Harvard, and she went to ca—or she went to Columbia—went to Harvard undergraduate, Columbia law. And she's practicing law in New York City and doing very well. And she turns thirty next week and Anna turns thirty-five next week.

SL: You are blessed.

JGT: Indeed.

[04:35:51] SL: And you have grandchildren, too.

JGT: Yes. Anna has two children that are grandchildren, and Kelly has three

children. So five grandchildren so far, and we'll see what else happens.

SL: Grandpa. Well, is there anything else that you want to talk about?

JGT: [*Laughs*] There well may be, but I can't think of it at this point.

SL: Well, you have really poured it out today, and I can't thank you enough. I do want to, you know, kinda throw it out there, if there's anything else that you want to say or talk about.

JGT: I—there probably is, but I can't think of it.

SL: Well, this has been fabulous.

JGT: Good, good.

SL: Good storyteller, good images, good history, remarkable, remarkable stories.

JGT: It's a long talk.

SL: It is a long talk, but you know, I think you did—I think you put a lot of stuff in a short amount of time. It's really less than five hours to talk about your entire life. So it's gonna be abbreviated however we do it but . . .

JGT: Well, I left out some of the skiin' and shootin' and scuba divin' and flyin' and other things that I've had the wonderful opportunity to do, so . . .

SL: Well, we can talk about those . . .

JGT: No.

SL: . . . if you want to. That's . . .

JGT: That's—I just talk about what you wanna talk about.

[04:37:13 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]