

Mary Dillard #2
First Person Plural Interview Summary
30 September 2014

Intro – Jo Blatti interviewing Mary Dillard for the First Person Plural project at her home in Malvern on 30 September 2014, returning to pick up a few questions

JB Reform juvenile justice

MD Board of Juvenile Justice, role peripheral, saw fallout juvenile, not court of record

JB You mean no transcripts?

MD No - country judges, not lawyers, often good old boys, very few social workers involved
Anne Raleigh very good
One kid ran away, abused by father/stepfather
Judge sent child back home
Judge tried to get social worker fired for challenging his judgment
Unschooled people, kids had no recourse

5 min

Don Crary, [then director of] Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families deserves the credit
Also for school breakfasts

Amy Rossi [present executive director Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families] talked [Gov. Mike] Huckabee into ARKids [ca 1997]

JB When?

MD I was involved - Sherry Walker & I consultants when committee of the bar developed constitutional amendment in the 1980s
In 1970s, consultant legislative
Carolyn Pollan, progressive Republican [represented Fort Smith area, 1975-2000] cared a lot about kids, spend a lot of time on healthcare, child abuse investigation

JB What did you find?

MD Most of workers had no investigative skills, trained police officers did a better job
Used a camera & ruler to show bruises, etc.,
Child abuse hot line went to state headquarters, didn't solve all, made things better

JB As a citizen, impression still a lot of social work involved

10 min

MD Yes, Medical, schools, best - social worker, child advocacy. To be fair to adults involved, important that people who interview children have special trainings.

Sue Madison [Democratic legislator Fayetteville, Arkansas House 1995-2000, Senate 2000-] moved into that role. I didn't have much to do with that after she came on scene.

JB You came of age as reproductive rights, pill- What do you remember?

MD As college student, abortion illegal

JB Unknown?

MD Of course not. My sister took a friend in Oklahoma. Carol implied something inappropriate [family response]. Real doctor, under blanket, garage, bringing her back.

15 min

Horror stories about infection, hospital emergencies.

And then the thing personally, we were guinea pigs - dangerously high levels hormones [in the early birth control pills].

IUDs [intrauterine devices] - killing people. I was married, health center, heavy bleeding, doctor would clip the strings - take it out!

Off the market, much too dangerous.

All the focus on women, not enough on men.

MD Kind of sad to see young women [now] no idea what life is like for other women - horrible

Happy accidents, tragic accidents [on birth control]

Story of lovely high school girl in Malvern [source, principal] good student

Raised by uncle, sexually abused, killed when applied to college

Situation completely unknown, unguessed

20 min

JB Tragic stories, earlier conversations, women's issues

MD Sexual Assault Coalition Arkansas

People don't want to talk about, so uncomfortable

Saline County - deputy prosecutor, difficult even to take a case to trial

Can't depend on women jurors to be on your side, easy to blame the victim

References realtor killed showing house outside Little Rock, 2014

25 min

JB What the Coalition do?

MD Not direct service, so little money, mostly volunteers

Training police, prosecutors in 30-40 counties where there are no direct services for victims

No one to go with them to hospital, court, etc. throughout the process

If someone is sympathetic, greater chance focus on perpetrator

Very few cases prosecuted, tough system

30 min

Good guys, Fayetteville, elsewhere - Gray LeMaster, used to be cop, now counselor
Gray told me a story about social worker, great team
First person [to speak w/ a victim] would be a regular patrol officer
Have you ever been treated for mental illness?

With any other crime would they ask that? Unless obvious situation?
Brief discussion homeless community

JB Title IX - recent attention UALR poster, any connection this initiative?

MD Yes and no. We've brought some people, a push nationwide

35 min

Much of what happens on campuses internal

JB I've heard women students speak about campus judiciary - women invited to take a break

MD One of our board members in 40s, raped first weeks on campus, roommate talked her into going to police. "Do you want to ruin boy's life?" No concern girl's life. Took several years to get over, never married. You know [speaks of a college administrator].

JB Let's move to several issues:
life with first husband. Were there other young women who shared reservations about military [caste system]?

MD I would think so. Lots of these young guys, lot of their wives well-educated

40 min

By time I got out of it, Fort Gordon [home of US Army Signal Corps, Augusta, GA], then Fort Carson [Army base near Colorado Springs, CO], he was sent to Korea. I stayed there, got a job, friends. I went to Boulder, grad school, out of that culture.
That [military] was the first time I was where extremely heavy drinking, even as college student. I'm sure there are lots of alcoholics in the military.

JB Current wet/dry issue in Arkansas [2014 ballot]

45 min

MD Got involved almost 30 years ago
Buddy Villines [longtime Pulaski County judge at the time of interview, 1992-2014] was the lead consultant, I did public relations initially
I got involved since handling charitable giving
I think most retailers family businesses, ones making the most are on county line
Mostly I'm on the wet side
I think it's a bad idea to take away all local options
I think it will be difficult for legislature to regulate well
And [while] I'm a social drinker, I kind of like living out where liquor stores rare. Tom [Dillard, husband] would argue differently.

It's big corporations wanting to get in the business

50 min

Wet/wet argument
I side with my friends

JB Fascinating to see how developed

MD Fewer people religious, emotions

JB I've asked the questions. Anything you'd like to add?

MD Can't think of anything. Looking forward to less busy life.

JB Think that will happen?

MD Couple of AARP [American Association for Retired Persons] things taking up attention - one will end this year. Turned down a board.

52 min

Off