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

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

Arkansas Memories Project

Edmond Freeman

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford and Roy Reed

June 2, 2009

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, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at http://pryorcenter.uark.edu. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

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

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th 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;
  - annotations for clarification and identification; 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 and Roy Reed interviewed Edmond Freeman on June 2, 2009, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Um—the first thing we're gonna do is take care of—of the business end of this deal. I have to say that my name is Scott Lunsford, and today we're at—uh—Ed and June Freeman's residence in Little Rock, Arkansas. Today's date is June 2—Roy—um—uh—2009. And we're here—uh—with the Pryor Center. We're gonna—uh—do a high-definition video recording and audio recording of—of this interview. And, Ed, I just have to ask you if it's all right with you that we're here videotaping this interview and that we take it back to the University of Arkansas, and we will archive it forever in the Special Collections Department in the Mullins Library at the Pryor Center. Is that all okay with you?

Edmond Freeman: You're—you're welcome to do so.

SL: Well, thank you very much. I can tell that you it's an honor. Now—um—your full name is Edmond Wroe Freeman, and Wroe

is spelled *W-R-O-E*. Is that—is that right?

EF: Uh—my full name is Edmond Wroe Freeman III.

SL: The third. Thank you.

EF: And the—it is spelled *W-R-O-E*.

[00:01:12] SL: Um—well, Edmond, let's start with when and where you were born.

EF: Uh—I was born May 31, 1926, in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, at the home where my parents were living—uh—at 1220 Main Street, Pine Bluff.

[00:01:35] SL: Um—well, let's talk a little bit about your—your parents. Now what was your father's name? He would be Junior, I would—I would assume.

EF: That's right. E. W. Freeman Jr.

SL: Uh-huh.

EF: And he went by the name of Wroe.

[00:01:48] SL: And your mother's—uh—name and maiden name?

EF: Uh—uh—Elizabeth Evelyn [pronounced Eev-lin] Councill.

SL: Okay. And—um—did they meet in Pine Bluff? Were they . . .

EF: I—I'm not certain. I think they met in Richmond, Virginia. Their—their—uh—uh—their parents—their—their mothers had been—uh—friends for a long, long time, and—uh—the—the—uh—the Pine Bluff connection—uh—visited—uh—Richmond a

number of times. And occasionally, there would be somebody from the Richmond connection who visited in Pine Bluff, but that was rather rare.

SL: And so you believe that your—uh—mom and dad met in Richmond then?

EF: That—I believe so.

[00:02:42] SL: Uh-huh. And—um—how much schooling did they have? Did they get—uh—high school degrees or—or graduate from high school?

EJ: Uh—they did. And—uh—um—my father briefly attended Virginia Military Institute—uh—and this was—uh—during the—uh—Spanish flu epidemic, and he contracted—uh—Spanish flu—it became pneumonia. Shortly after he was at VMI, I think it was a matter of—of—months—practic—possibly weeks, and—uh—was—was hospitalized in their in—infirmary there. And I'm told that he came very close to dying at—at that time. But—but, fortunately, he did recover.

SL: That's in—uh—Lexington, Virginia—uh—VMI there. Uh . . .

EF: That's right.

[00:03:43] SL: Uh—they kinda share a—a—side by side with Washington and Lee University. Um—so—um—were your parents married after he attended VMI or . . .

EF: Uh—yes. Uh—they were married in 1919.

SL: Mh-hmm.

EF: My mother was born in 1900 and was nineteen at the time they were married. My father was born in 1897, so he was a few years older.

[00:04:12] SL: Mh-hmm. Now did he have a—a role in—uh—the First World War or . . .

EF: Yes, he was—uh—he was—uh—spent some time at—uh—they called it Camp Pike in those days, I believe.

SL: Hmm.

EF: Now I guess it's perhaps Camp Robinson . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

EF: . . . today. Uh—and he was commissioned as a second lieutenant. He—he—I—I think he told me story that he may—for—for a very short period, he may have been the—[*laughs*] the only second lieutenant in the—in the—in the army because all the others—second lieutenants he thought had been promoted to first lieutenant. [*Laughter*] So I'm not certain of the accuracy of that.

[00:04:56] SL: Uh-huh. Well—uh—so your—um—your mom and dad—were—I wonder if they—did they live—um—off the—the—uh—barracks there at Camp Pike or did—were they together

then or . . .

EF: I—I don't think so. I—I—I'm not certain, but I . . .

SL: Okay.

EF: . . . I don't think so.

SL: Okay.

EF: And they were—they were married in 1919, as I said, in—and that was in—uh—in Richmond.

[00:05:27] SL: Okay. And their—and your mother finished high school, too, and so the—I would assume that would be the Richmond—at Richmond—some high schools there in Richmond, Virginia.

EF: Uh—yes—yes.

SL: Um—let me think for just a moment now. Um—it's interesting—now there is a—um—is it Nayman—Colonel Nayman was from Richmond? Is it Neeman or Nayman?

EF: Uh—Newman.

SL: Newman.

EF: *N-E-W-M-A-N*.

SL: Uh-huh. Now it's interesting that—uh—your dad was stationed in Little Rock for a while, and the—the colonel had actually been in Pine Bluff. Uh—this would be your father's—um—father-in-law. Is that right?

EF: Uh—no, Major Newman?

SL: Uh-huh.

EF: Major Newman—uh—would've been my father's grandfather.

[00:06:27] SL: Grandfather. Okay. And—uh—do you wanna talk about your grandfather for just a little bit—your dad's grandfather?

EF: My—my great-grandfather?

SL: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

EF: Uh—well—um—I—I knew my great-grandfather only by—by hearsay—family stories and so forth—because he died in 1911 . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

EF: . . . and I was born in 1926. Uh—the family story is that—uh—he was—he was—uh—from a Virginia family—I'm not sure whether it was Richmond or not—uh—and that—uh—that he left the family at—at a very ear—[*clears throat*] at a very early age. Uh—according to some account that I've read or heard, it may be as early as thirteen, but certainly—uh—it woulda been as a—as a teenager. And—um—he—uh—I—I don't know the circumstances, but he—uh—he ended up in Arkansas. He was in the newspaper business in one fashion, and with one newspaper or another, he claimed in—in writings that I've seen since 1868,

which woulda been shortly after the—a few years after the end of the Civil War. Uh—he—for a time, he was in—in—uh—in—uh—Fort Smith, Arkansas. Uh—according to something I've read, for a time, he was in Little Rock and—uh—was supposedly a part-owner of the *Gazette*—uh—at that time, but—uh—?gave it up? and—uh—came to Pine Bluff. Had an association with a paper that I don't think I've ever seen called the *Pine Bluff Press*. And—um—uh—founded the—uh—the *Pine Bluff Commercial*. Uh—we think that the correct date is 1881. Uh—we're—we're pretty sure that it is. Um—he used to say—uh—used to—I think he had on his—on his letterhead—uh—"In the newspaper business since"—uh—"1868." But—uh—when we were getting ready for our hundredth—uh—anniversary . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:08:54] EF: . . . we put an investigative reporter on the—on the job, and—uh—he concluded from his investigation that—uh—the *Commercial* had no right to claim—uh—that it was a successor to the *Pine Bluff Press*, and in consequence—uh—we—we became younger.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:09:14] EF: We had been claiming 1868 as our founding date. And then, af—after that, we began to claim 1881 as the

founding . . .

SL: Well, that's still quite a ways back. That's still [*laughs*] pretty early. Um—let's talk a little bit about—um—well, do you know anything about your great-grandmother at all?

EF: Uh—I do, indeed.

SL: Okay.

[00:09:40] EF: Uh—uh—the home where I was born—uh—belonged to my grandparents—my paternal grandparents—and they lived there, and also my—uh—paternal—uh—great-grandmother lived there. Uh—she lived to be, I think, ninety-four years of age, [*Roy Reed coughs*] and I was—um—I was—uh—uh—a—a—uh—I guess I was nearly—uh—my teen—teenage years by the time she—she died. I forget the date of that. Uh—she was a very important—she played a very important role in my—uh—in my young life. Uh—I had two siblings, and they lived in the house as well, so we had—we had—uh—what was that, four generations?

SL: Yeah.

[00:10:37] EF: Four generations there. And—um—I was clearly my great-grandmother's favorite—uh—great-grandchild. And—uh—she was always—uh—my supporter. Uh—I think she thought I couldn't do anything wrong, but—but if—if I did, I was

perfectly—in her view, I was perfectly justified in doing so. [*SL laughs*] And any—anytime I—I felt the need of—of a—of a—of a deep and personal friend, I—I—no matter what my problem was, she was always available. And I remember when she thought I needed it, she would reach up into a—a—a hanging corner cabinet and bring down a—a bottle of peppermint pills, and she would give me a peppermint pill, and then we would talk.

[00:11:31] SL: Well, that's great. [*EF laughs*] Do you remember any of the conversations that you had with her?

EF: Uh—yes. Uh—she was—uh—she was a—a—a—a devout Episcopalian.

SL: Mh-hmm.

EF: And—um—when I knew her, she always wore black. I'm not sure whether it was—uh—the result of—I'm not sure whether that started when her husband died in 1911 or whether it started when—when her only son died—uh—drowning in the Arkansas River at the age of twelve. But when . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:12:12] EF: . . . I knew my great-grandmother, she was always dressed in black, but she—uh—she was not a—uh—a—a som—somber or morose person—uh—despite her attire. Um—and I—but the time came when she did not—uh—did not go out for—

early on in my—in my knowledge, she would occasionally go out for a ride with a friend. But in—uh—later times, she would maybe go out into the—into the yard and did—and didn't—didn't go about. And she—in consequence, she missed the—uh—church services.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:12:54] EF: And I was aware of that, and I knew that she—uh—uh—regretted that. And so I—as a youngster, I would go to the church services and try to pay very close attention to the sermon, and then when I came back from church, I'd go up to her room and sit down, and I would try to recapitulate the—the sermons as well as I—I was able. And she would ask me questions and that sorta thing. We talked about many other things, too, but—uh—uh—I think that was a—a very formative—uh—experience for me.

SL: Well, sure. You were—uh—filing a report from church early—early on.

EF: Mh-hmm.

[00:13:365] SL: Did she talk about her husband much?

EF: Uh—some. Uh—she did. Uh—she said that—uh—she said that she would have followed him anywhere. Um—she told me—uh—family stories about the—the Civil War. Uh—she—her husband

had been a Confederate officer, and—um—she was—uh—she was very much a—a—in her sympathy, she was very much a—a Confederate sympathist. However, one of her closest friends, I remember, was a—a Yankee from Ohio.

SL: Hmm.

EF: And there—ah—she—she was very much a—a—a supporter of the Confederacy, but that didn't interfere with her—her friendship, apparently.

[00:14:34] SL: Well, so did she have any Civil War stories—any—did—did her husband ever get wounded or—um . . .

EF: Not—not so far as I know. Um—it was a family story that he was—uh—um—in two duels, and I think—uh—I'm not sure about this—but I think no one was killed in either of—either of the duels. Uh—he did have a—a—I guess they call 'em a—a brace of dueling pistols. Uh—my brother and . . .

SL: Hmm.

[00:15:12] EF: . . . I both saw them. Uh—years—when we were, excuse me, young adults—uh—he—uh—my father told me that he—he was sitting on his Grandfather Major Newman's lap one time, and Major Newman said, "Wroe, do you see that fly over there on the wall?" He said, "Yes, sir." He said, "I can shoot that with a pistol." Uh—I have no idea whether that was—uh—

I'm—I'm—I'm con—I'm confident that that was said to my father, but I have no idea whether that was accurate or not. But I do—I do believe that—uh—an editor, in those days, would—[*SL laughs*] he'd be well served by a reputation for being a crack shot.

SL: [*Laughter*] I bet so, too. Well—um—I just wonder if—um—so how—how did your—um—um—grandmother—or great-grandmother feel about—uh—you know, the defeat of the South and—and the Union winning the Civil War? Did that—uh—and I'm assuming they were in Pine—were they in Pine Bluff during the war or . . .

EF: Well—um—Major Newman was. Uh—I—I'm not—um—my great-grandmother's—uh—father was A. G. A. Coleman. Armistead—uh—Alfred George Armistead Coleman. Uh—he—he—uh—he was from Virginia. I presume his wife was from Virginia as well. They settled in—um—Drew County, and—uh—I don't know when that occurred, and I'm—I'm not—I'm not com—I'm not completely sure where my—their—their daughter, my great-grandmother, was born—whether it was Vir—Virginia or—or—uh—Arkansas. Somewhere I have—he—he—uh—according to the family story, he had—opened some kind of a—a school and taught—uh—I think, Greek—Greek and Latin and maybe other

courses as well. And I don't know anything about his—uh—his educational background. I think somewhere—uh—I have a—a copy of—uh—of his daughter's—my great-grandmother's—report card when she was a—in—in—in—in school—uh—under her father's tute—tutelage. [*Laughs*] I think she made good grades. [*Laughter*]

[00:17:59] SL: I bet she needed to. [*Laughter*] Well, that's—uh—so—um—you—you never got any kind of bitterness from your great-grandmother about the outcome of the Civil War, if any?

EF: Uh—I think the answer to that is no. No bitterness. But I do—I recall a couple of stories she told me. I don't know whether—uh—precisely who they involved, and I don't know precisely where they took place—whether it was Virginia or Arkansas. She told one story about a—a man—uh—who was working crops. Uh—I don't know whether he was a relative or not. Uh—uh—he was not in the service because he was—was deaf, and—uh—the women had to work the crops with the—whatever help they—they had and what—whatever men were—were not suitable for—for military service. He was an older man who was—who was deaf, and—uh—uh—according to my great-grandmother—I called her Gan—uh—uh—Union soldiers—uh—he was in the field and called on him to halt, and—uh—he didn't hear him, and he

kept walking. I guess he called halt a time or two and no—no change, and so he shot him. And—um—and—uh—then they went to the body, and one member of—of—of his family said, "Don't shoot him again. He's dead." So that was one story that she told me. Another story that she told me was about a family that was expecting—uh—Union soldiers to arrive at their farmstead. And in preparation for that, they had dug a pit, and they hid the silver and other valuables and also—uh—foodstuffs and so forth in the pit—covered it up—uh—and—uh—hoped that they would not be taken. Well—uh—while they were being questioned by—while the family was being questioned by the Union soldiers—um—the family's dog came up with lard all over his muzzle, and they wondered where that was coming from, and they found the cache and—uh—and took whatever they wanted.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:34] SL: Well, that was pretty common, though. That was pretty much how the troops subsisted on both sides . . .

EF: Right.

SL: . . . it's my understanding.

EF: Right. And I don't recall her telling that with—that was a narrative and not a diatribe.

[00:20:48] SL: Right. Right. Well, now what about the maternal side of your grandparents and parents? This is all on the paternal side, right?

EF: That's right. My mother had two sisters and a brother. I think she was the second child. They grew up in Richmond, Virginia, on Belmont Avenue, and I referred to my—those grandparents as Grandmother Bessie and Granddaddy Councill, and I knew the—I knew all of her siblings. They—the youngest was a boy. They were—and there were the three girls. And my mother was—well, for my mother, Virginia was always God's country, and she loved Virginia, and she loved Virginia history. She was a great admirer of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson and so forth. I—one thing that's—one thing that she told me—there's a significant—an important street—I guess, a boulevard in Richmond called Monument Avenue. And there are a number of statues of various important people—heroes and particularly of the Civil War. And [*SL coughs*] one of those, of course, was Robert E. Lee. And my mother told a story about as a school girl, being invited or dragooned into helping place the newly created monument to Lee at its proper place on Monument Avenue, and the city fathers had used large howsers, and they used scores of school children to man those ropes and help bring

that statue into place. And I often thought what a memorable thing that would've been for all of those youngsters. And I—to have a played a part in setting up the statue of Robert E. Lee. Now that was another family story.

[00:24:06] SL: Well, now were your—were both sides of the family fairly affluent? I mean, were they comfortable? Were they—it sounds like to me they were pretty well educated. Were they farmers or . . .

EF: No, they were not farmers. The—Granddaddy Councill had been a—had been a salesman for some company and—or series of companies, and I don't know very much about that. I'm not sure about his education, but he struck me as a child as being well spoken and humorous and a very good shot because he was a squirrel hunter and perhaps hunted other things as well. Grandmother Bessie was a very warm and loving person, and they lived in a—when I knew them, and I think that this had been the case for quite some time—they lived in a duplex on, as I say, Belmont Avenue in Richmond, which was right across the street from the Benedictine monastery. [00:25:31] And we—it was a large field there and as kids visiting our grandparents and our aunts and uncle when we were taken up there by our mother to Richmond, we played in that field a lot. And I'm not sure of

the education—they had a library in the house. Some of their relatives were—at least one of their relatives was a missionary in foreign lands, and India was one of those lands at one time. I—I'm not sure of the relationship, but I met this woman at my grandparents' house there. There was a building that—in Richmond that was called the Battle Abbey at that time. I think it's since been renamed. It had quite a number of paintings having to do with battles—probably not just the Civil War—probably the Revolution and the War of 1812 as well. I can't be certain, but I believe it was—and it—but it would have. And also fairly near their home there that we visited, there was what we called the Old Soldiers'—what was called the Old Soldiers' Home. And I would go there from time to time and chat with—for—briefly with some of the old Civil War veterans that were still there. And I remember—I think it was in connection with the Old Soldiers' Home, though it may have been the Battle Abbey. There was a glass enclosure, and there was a . . .

Trey Marley: Excuse me. I think we have an error with a computer. If we could interrupt for just one second . . .

SL: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[00:27:44] SL: Ed, I'm sorry about the interruption. But we have

been talking about your mom taking you to the Old Soldiers' Home there in Richmond, and there were—you believe there were Civil War veterans there that you got to go visit. Is that—so this is in downtown Richmond, I would assume.

EF: Residential Richmond because it was—as I recall it, it was only a few blocks from where we lived because I—I'm pretty sure I went there subsequently by myself. I can't tell you just how old I was. But I had a very—as I've already mentioned, I had a very close relationship with a very elderly woman—my great-grandmother in Arkansas, and I felt comfortable talking with the older people at that time, and I—and enjoyed it. And I think I made some—one or two trips over there by myself.

[00:28:58] SL: And they'd ordinarily be outdoors—out—outside?

EF: Yes. I don't recall being inside. I may have been. I—I've—what I recall is that there were some benches outside of the building, and I seem to recall sitting on a bench with one or another of the old Civil War soldiers there.

[00:29:25] SL: Were they pretty sharp and still—or I mean, I guess I'm wondering, was it also a hospital in some way? Did they care for them? Were there injuries that they were havin' to live with? Do you remember any of the conditions of the men that you were visiting with?

EF: I really don't recall that.

[00:29:50] SL: Okay. Okay, well, let's get back to your—let's get back to your mom and dad. We've kind of covered your great-grandparents a little bit, and we'll talk a little bit more about your great-grandmother in Pine Bluff. But let's talk about growin' up with your mom and dad. Now what was it that your dad did for a living?

EF: He worked with his father in the newspaper and printing business. At that time, the printing was an important part of the business. Many years later, we didn't—weren't involved in the—in printing—just in producing the newspaper. But at that time, printing was a very important thing. And my father was more interested in the printing business part of the company than he was in the newspaper, though he was interested in that as well. But he spent a lot of time as [EF edit: at] selling printing in town and in other states as well. My—I guess it was my grandfather had the notion that—well, if you had a printing press and you used that printing press just for a short period of time a day, that maybe that could be used efficiently for doing some circular printing for customers. And that would—that was part of the idea—try to maximize the investment in the large newspaper press. But in addition to that, we had all kinds of smaller

presses, and in later years, offset presses and specialized presses for printing envelopes. And we had a photoengraving shop, and we had a bookbinding shop, so we were able to do some simple bookbinding as well.

[00:32:13] SL: So that's really a very robust physical plant in the—on the newspaper side of the business that all the—all these different types of printing that would be going on. And you also had the ability to reproduce images. Is that right? It was a . . .

EF: That's right. We could—we—in those days, they—a newspaper photographer would go out and take a photograph of an accident or whatever, and it—with a Speed Graphic camera in those days.

And then develop it and make what was called a photoengraving, which was a very laborious and complex operation. That was—as I became an apprentice photoengraver—as my—I guess, my second job at the—in connection with the family business.

[00:33:19] SL: So that meant probably etching into metal, I would guess.

EF: That's right. Zinc plates and dilute nitric acid.

SL: Sounds kinda dangerous. [*Laughter*]

EF: Well, it was an interesting process and very intricate. It made use of a acid-resistant material in powder form that had—was

called "dragon's blood" because it was red in color, and that was useful in the engraving process.

SL: And so your father really—do you think that it was his daddy that instilled that interest in the mechanical side of the business? Or was his dad—did his dad kinda concentrate on that, too, or—I would assume that his dad probably had to do everything, early on.

EF: Well, I think of my grandfather as—E. W. Freeman—as a very astute businessman. He was also interested in having good equipment and, where he could afford it, modern equipment. He was the boss until he died, and he relied heavily on my father and, to a lesser extent, on my uncle.

SL: Now your uncle's name was . . .

EF: Gordon . . .

SL: Gordon.

EF: . . . Newman Freeman.

SL: Uh-huh. So he took—his middle name was from your great-grandfather, Major Newman.

EF: Right.

[00:35:27] SL: So do you remember what a typical day was like for your father?

EF: Well, they varied quite a lot because when he was traveling, of

course, that day would be quite different from when he was not traveling. He was involved with the—as I say, mostly with the printing end of the business, so he would be overseeing, to some extent, the production of the printing. And he needed to know quite a bit about that in order to be a good salesman of that. He became something of an expert in different papers—different grades of paper and that sort of thing. And I remember traveling him—with him one time to call on a printing customer, and it—the customer handed out a sheet of paper, and Dad held it up to the light to check the watermark and whatnot and felt it. And he said, "That is a beautiful sheet of such-and-such," and so on. And he really had a feeling about printing papers. And I think that—I—he was a salesman, and it was good that he did, but I think that was totally genuine. And I think he probably sold quite a bit of printing on the basis of really caring about that sort of thing. [*Laughs*]

[00:37:13] SL: So how wide were his travels in selling printing business?

EF: He—to Illinois. He—he'd travel some to Chicago. He traveled New Orleans and Atlanta and various places. I guess, Texas. He sold a lot of printing to a—an entrepreneur out in Hollywood who was—I happen to remember this—he was promoting a picture—a

documentary-type picture that was set in Africa. And the name of the picture was the *Karamoja*. I'm not sure whether that was the name of a tribe that—or what, but we printed hundreds of thousands of newsprint circulars for his use. And we also printed much higher quality brochures and whatnot—multicolor brochures for him. And he was very flattering about the work that we did for him and paid some of his bills. [*Laughter*] And some he did not pay. And we—my brother and I framed a telegram that he had written to my father at one time, and we had it framed, and we put it on a wall someplace, just as a cautionary reminder of [*laughs*]—that sort of thing—the possibility of that sort of thing happening.

SL: Well, so travel was by train, of course.

EF: And some by car, too. Yeah. Yeah, he did some of both. Earlier, I guess, it would've been more by train, and then later, by car.

[00:39:38] SL: So do you remember the trains at all? I mean, do you remember—did you ride on trains, growing up?

EF: Yes. It—I remember as a child riding from Pine Bluff to Richmond in the summertime. I also remember more than one car trip between Pine Bluff and Richmond.

SL: Those were early-model cars.

EF: Yeah, and I can't tell you—there was a kind of a—had some—I say—a somewhat unsavory story that I remember about one of those car trips to Virginia. My grandfather made this trip, and I think my mother was driving the car. And I guess the three of us kids were in the back seat. I don't think my father was on this trip. And my grandfather grew up on a farm in—near Hawesville, Kentucky, and he, like many men of that era, chewed tobacco. His preference was Thin Drummond tobacco. And sometimes he would send me to the store to buy some Thin Drummond for him. Well, anyway, he was seated in the front seat of the car, and I was seated behind him in the backseat. And I watched his body language [*SL laughs*] with some care, so that I—this was long before air-conditioning—so I could roll my window up in a hurry if need be. But he learned a lesson himself on this occasion because he got rid of his tobacco through what he thought was his open window, but it was closed. [*Laughter*] As I say, a somewhat unsavory story.

[00:41:57] SL: Well, that's good. Well, so do you remember the—I mean, were cars always around when you were growing up, or do you remember the first car that the family had or . . .

EF: No, I—but my grandfather had a Chevrolet, and I think my parents, I think, had a Ford. My grandmother had a blue

Oldsmobile coupe, I think. And she once showed me—she once showed me a medal that she got from a—an insurance company—an automobile insurance company—that was commending her for wreck-free driving for some period of time, and she showed it to me with some pride. I called her "Othermother." And I said, "Othermother, that medal should've gone to all those people on—in their cars who saw you coming down the street and then pulled over to the side [*SL laughs*] to get outta your way." And fortunately, she had a good sense of humor. [*Laughter*]

SL: So were the streets in Pine Bluff paved when you were growing up, or were they dirt or . . .

EF: Some of the outlying streets were dirt, but yes, they were paved. Some were brick, and at some point, some were asphalt. I guess there was some concrete as well. My recollection is a streetcar track ran down the middle of Main Street or—yeah.

[00:44:01] SL: Before we get to your childhood—growin' up and school and stuff—what about your mom? Was your mom pretty much a homemaker? Was she at home all the time?

EF: Most of the time. She had some civic involvements, of course. She did very little cooking. When I grew up, we had a husband-

and-wife team as servants. The man—the woman did the cooking—or most of it. And the man alternated between being yardman—taking care of the yard—and of assisting in the kitchen but especially serving at table when we had guests. Well, I guess he served even when we didn't, but when we had guests, my grandmother would have him don a white jacket, and he was a—he was really a—very adept at doing a number of different jobs. He was quite adept.

SL: Did they have a—their own little place in back of the house or . . .

EF: They did have. There was a separate place where they lived.

SL: And did y'all have your own garden, too?

EF: We had a flower garden.

SL: Okay.

EF: There was a rose garden. I guess it had originally been my great-grandmother's. And I remember hydrangeas around the house, and I remember lilies of the valley around the house. That was my mother's favorite. I think my father's favorite—we didn't grow—these were carnations, I believe. And I had—as a kid, I spent a fair amount of time with Ophelia and with Leroy, the servants. I—sometimes she would be baking biscuits and make one in a special shape that might appeal to a youngster for

my benefit and . . .

SL: Well, now y'all had at—now correct me if I'm wrong—at one point there were four generations of your family living in that house. Is that . . .

EF: That's right.

SL: So your mom had her work cut out for her just managing all that, I would assume.

[00:46:45] EF: My—it would—as I say, it was my grandparents' house, and so they were basically in charge of things having to do with the house. My mother insisted upon being in charge of the chi—of her children. And if there was—I think, for the most part, she and her—my mother and her mother-in-law got along pretty well, but my mother did—didn't allow much interference with the children.

SL: She did the disciplining. And so what was the African American community and the white community in Pine Bluff back then? What—did you see the signs of segregation? Did you see the "colored" water fountains, and was the segregation was pretty much . . .

[00:47:57] EF: Yes, indeed. I think the courthouse had a fountain for whites and a fountain for—I guess it said "colored." Yes. And the schools were totally segregated. I'm—I feel confident

that the riders on the streetcar were separated. I think the most ridiculous thing I remember seeing in that regard was a cold drink box at some—probably some gas station in the area. It was one of those old boxes that—about so long [spreads hands about to arm's length] with a removable top that had a hinge in the middle—a handle on either side, so you open it up on this side [gestures as if opening a lid hinged in the center] or open it up on this side. And one side was labeled "white." One side of the hinge was labeled "white," and the other side was labeled "colored," and there was a single box underneath with no—[*laughter*] and it just struck me as—it struck me as ridiculous. If you were—if you were out of "white" Coca-Colas, you could reach down over there, [gestures as if reaching under the hinged partition] and there might be a "black" Coca-Cola, which, when you moved it past the hinge, I guess, became a "white" Coca-Cola. And you—and I'm not sure whether that was essentially a joke or was a serious illustration of someone who was a rigid segre—I don't know that, but it—to me, it seemed like an absolutely ridiculous [*laughs*] thing. I think the—and, of course, we had the poll tax at that time. [*SL sighs*] But there was no sales tax at that time.

[00:50:02] SL: So now the poll tax—that was—refresh me on this.

That was a tax that that white landowners paid. Is that right? And then that's kinda the way votes were bought and paid for, too, wasn't it? I mean, how did that work?

EF: Well, as I recall, everybody had to pay a poll tax—individual poll tax. I have no doubt that some of the farmers or planters—I have no doubt that some of those furnished the money and may've made mass purchases of giving the names of the servants. And I can't say that I observed this, but I'm confident that it happened in some cases, if they told—that they then thought they could tell the—their servants—their workmen how to vote. But everybody had to have a—had to pay a poll ta—it was a nominal amount but a nominal amount for a lot of people—mostly blacks but also some whites—was something to consider. It didn't—many people didn't vote as a result of that.

[00:51:31] SL: As a child growing up in Pine Bluff, did you have any African American friends? Did you ever spend any time at all with the black community when you were growing up or was that just strictly not done?

EF: There were no blacks, I believe, who lived in my immediate neighborhood. I—as I've mentioned, I had a—I spent a fair amount of time as a child with our servants, and those relations were good. I think they—I like—I liked them and learned things

from them, and they seemed to like me. There was a young black man that sometimes did odd jobs for a close friend of mine who was white, and I had—I spent some time with him. He—I'd be hard pressed to say that he was a friend, but we had cordial relations and played some catch together with a ball and that sort of thing. But I guess I shouldn't call him a friend. I'm not thinking of the church's—my—the church that I went to was segregated. I don't know that a black person would've been turned away, but they did not come, and there was a black church where Episcopalians could—attended services.

SL: Well, in those days, the servants were almost—almost part of the family 'cause they were—the interaction was constant. I mean, it was every day and between the meals and keeping the place up and—I—it just—I mean, a lotta times, there would be—a black lady would help raise the children, actually, and . . .

[00:53:50] EF: Well, before there was Ophelia and Leroy in the place, I had a part-time nurse to relieve my mother. I guess my ear—my older sister had as well, but I—and I remember her very, very fondly. She—I think her name was Nancy Raspberry, and she was the—she was kindness itself. She was—I was—you know, I was a—just a little bit more than a—an infant, I guess, and she called me her little lion. [*SL laughs*] And why a lion, I

have no idea. But she was a—she would—it—she was a great comfort—and a very, very nice woman. My mother—oh, my—the—a long-term servant in Richmond and one that my mother was very close to was—all I know is Bett—but Bett was there for years and years, and I remember Bett—my mother was very, very close to her and very, very fond of her.

SL: So—but Bett was always in Richmond. She never—but . . .

EF: That's right.

SL: But your mom looked as forward to seeing her when visiting, probably, as anyone.

EF: Yes, indeed.

SL: Uh-huh. There seemed to have been great affections—real affections for servants, and almost a protective nature about them.

EF: Yes.

[00:55:31] SL: If they were sick, you know, you tried to care for them. Well, let's talk a little bit about your school, then. Were you a good elementary grade school student? Were you . . .

EF: I would say pretty good. I went to a private school—a Mrs. Fulgham's—had a private school, and that's where I started school. And it was probably—maybe six blocks from where I lived. And all the students were white. And she was a nice lady

and I—and a good teacher. And she had a rather large room and handled six grades in that one room. And I guess everybody—I guess the public schools at that time in Pine Bluff only went a half day. The students only went a half day. I believe that's—that continued for some time. I went to Mrs. Fulgham—I guess it was for two years. And the family story is that I enjoyed school and wanted to stay for the afternoon session and told my mother that. And she said, "No, Edmond, we're paying for the half day of school. And besides that, it's—that's what it's supposed to be. It's not supposed to be for the—for you in the afternoon as well." And according to the family story, I burst into tears and said, "Well, if you don't want me to learn"—[*SL laughs*] and so my mother talked with Mrs. Fulgham, and Mrs. Fulgham told her that, "Edmond is no problem. When he's not involved in reciting and so forth, he sits quietly, and he reads. And he's no problem at all, and it's fine for him to stay there in the afternoon." So I began to do [*laughs*] that with my mother's permission. At first, I was taken to that school, and then later I walked. It was the—walked to school. And I guess I took my lunch. Anyway, after th—after that, I went to Lakeside Elementary School, and I believe after the two years that—with Mrs. Fulgham, I think I entered the fourth grade. I got a—kind

of a year ahead of—I was a year younger than most everybody else. And kinda from that time on through high school. Yeah.

[00:58:44] SL: You think that's probably due to the reading activity you did early on? That . . .

EF: I think that had a lot to do with it, and I guess I—maybe I listened to some of the other kids being—who went through—you know, the older kids of going through some of their lessons. I think my first teacher was a Mrs. Stitch in the [*laughs*] fourth grade at Lakeside Elementary School.

[00:59:14] SL: What kinds of activities hap—was there a recess? Were you given recess time? What happened at recess when you were in grade school?

EF: Different kinds of games, and one that attract—I just thought about this—one that attracted my attention a lot was playing marbles. On the ground on a grass-free section of ground, we'd play different kinds of marbles. And we'd play for keeps. And I got fairly good at playing marbles, and I had a—quite a collection of marbles by the time that that activity ended for me.

SL: So when you're playing marbles, if you knock a marble out of the circle—there's a boundary that—kind of a playing field that the marbles are put in the middle of, and when you shoot a marble—and that's called a shooter. Is that right—the . . .

EF: Yeah, or a tau.

SL: Or . . .

[01:00:17] EF: A tau. And I—maybe *T-A-U*. I'm not or—I'm not sure how it was—where that came from. There were different marble games, and some with the circle that you're talking about. And you shot from outside the circle—at the circle edge. There were others where you had a rectangular circle, and that's where the marbles were, and then a line drawn across before that enclosed—that rectangle, and you would stand at some distance behind another line, and you wanted to knock the marbles out of that rectangle. But you had to—you lagged so that you went past that lagging line. You couldn't just roll from the start. You'd have to do that. And you'd try to knock 'em out as you lagged, and I think if you—I think if your tau ended up within the enclosure, you had to . . .

SL: Start over.

EF: That was your turn, and you had to go back and lag over again, and you'd try to knock 'em out of the circle. You kept 'em when you did.

[01:01:40] SL: So you were to be reckoned with on—in the marbles circuit.

EF: Well, I was one of—Edward Foot was a very good marble shooter

[*SL laughs*], too, and we had quite some contests. But if we were on the same side, well, we usually did pretty well.

SL: That's good. Any other recess activities?

TM: Scott, we need to change tapes real quick.

SL: Oh, okay.

[Tape stopped]

[01:02:08] SL: So let's see. Back in school—was there a favorite subject that you liked in school—in grade school? Did you find yourself—I know you were already reading ahead of your grade level, but was there art or music or any athletic activities that you were particularly drawn to?

[01:02:38] EF: I was aware that football was very important in high school, and so I was interested in football, and I played sandlot football. At—when I was a kid, there was a—an older girl in my neighborhood that really enjoyed sports, and she taught a bunch of us youngsters various things about football. And I can't remember whether she—I don't think she played with us, but she kinda divided us up into teams and then would kinda referee. She was a very nice person and—Sybil Little. Sybil Little. But I was—at—in—at that time, I was pretty small, and I was fast. I was rather fast on my feet, but I would—I'm—[*laughs*] later on when I got to junior high school, I went out for

the football team, and I was still quite small at that time. And I remember the coach said, "Okay, you, you, you, you—over here, and you, you, you—over here." And he said to the group that I was in—he said, "Here's the football. Now you-all go ahead and have a good time." And then he went off with the team that he he wanted.

SL: [*Laughter*] Probably based on size. [*EF laughs*] Almost entirely on size, I bet. What about math? Did you ever pick up on math at all? Did you enjoy math?

EF: I did. I enjoyed math and English. I didn't have a—at that time, I didn't have a great deal of interest in history for some reason. That's—that ceased to be the case later, but I didn't have much interest in history. We didn't have art in school, as I recall it—and music. For a time, my sister had ta—my older sister had taken piano lessons, and someone thought it would be a good idea if I learned something about music. After I'd been doing it for a while, they thought better of that. [*SL laughs*] My—the instrument that I—was chosen was the violin. I remember playing [*laughs*] "My Country, 'Tis of Thee" horribly. I think that—I think they—that whoever was interested in music thought—so—thought too much of music to allow me to continue too long. [*Laughs*]

SL: It was painful for all around you.

EF: [*Laughs*] Yeah, I was not an excellent violinist.

[01:05:47] SL: Well, now did the house you grow up in—did it have a piano in it?

EF: Yes, it did and a Victrola.

SL: Now your—a radio, or is that a record player that you're talking about?

EF: Yeah, you—it was a record player. And you—it's spring-loaded, so you cranked up the spring, and then it would run for some time. And we also had a ra—a separate radio 'cause the Victrola was not a radio.

[01:06:18] SL: Uh-huh. And do you remember any of the records you listened to?

EF: My uncle taught us a World War I song called "Fritzi Boy." "Keep Your Head Down, Fritzi Boy." [*Laughter*] Which started out, "Over in the trenches, up to their eyes in clay, Billy and Jacky [EF edit: Jack] and Jimmy and Joe were singing all the day. If you see a German sticking up his snout, give him a chance to get out of France when they all—they'd all shout, 'Keep your head down, Fritzi Boy. Keep your head out [EF edit: down]'"—that's—that kind of a thing and some other World War I songs. And then, later, I—my sister was four years older than I was,

and I—there was a Sunday night, I believe—hit parade. *Lucky Strike Hit Parade* on the radio. And as I recall, that they had—they played the most popular songs of the time, and they'd rank them. "Just The Way You Look Tonight" was one of them.

SL: Are those big orchestra pieces—big band pieces?

EF: Yeah. "Just The Way You Look Tonight." "Dancing Cheek To Cheek" was another one. That's . . .

[01:08:13] SL: What about radio programs? What—do you remember any of the—any radio shows that you would—I mean, did you—did the family ever gather around the radio for a particular program? Was there a favorite show that . . .

EF: In—I recall in Richmond, there was some of that for *Amos 'n' Andy*. It—in Pine Bluff, I frequently listened with my sister to the—to those big band songs. And, of course, in—of course, in December of 1941, we gathered around the radio after the—at the attack on Pearl Harbor. There was a—I had a radio in—I ended up inheriting what had been my uncle's room. As a teenager, I inherited that—he married and moved away. And I bought a radio with some of the first money I own—I earned working at the *Commercial*. And I regularly listened to a newscaster. And right now I'm having—I think he came on at or near noon, and I'm having trouble remembering his name now.

I would know it if it was—if it were spoken, I'm sure. But I liked his presentation a lot at that time.

[01:10:16] SL: So what about the piano now? Did the family ever gather around and listen to your sister play the piano? Or were there times when y'all would gather around the piano and sing? Was there—I mean, was your household very musical at all? Was there—you know, sometimes there's uncles or even aunts that were in some kind of group—minstrel group that would play . . .

EF: I . . .

SL: . . . came outta the family.

[01:10:47] EF: There—the piano was also a player piano. So it had perforated ro—scrolls of songs. It could be used that way as well, and we'd—it—and we'd listen to a number of things that way. My father used to sing ditties and songs—never anything approaching professional quality. But he enjoyed singing from time to time. I'd—maybe my mother a lullaby or two. That sort of thing. My uncle fooled with it a little bit. My sister was a—I wouldn't—she did all right as a piano player, but I wouldn't say she was especially gifted. And it may be that my younger brother was the most musical of the immediate family. He had a very good sense of rhythm, and he played a cornet. And in high

school, I guess it was—maybe he started in junior high—he was in the band, and I think he was second chair. A cornet player. He said there was—I was talking with him not too long ago, and he said that although he was younger than the others, there was—he could beat [*chair squeaks*] all of 'em except one. And he could—he said he could never beat this one and never got first chair but was [*SL laughs*] second chair.

SL: Well, what about—so I'm assuming—did the house have running water and electricity? Was gas already in line at the house? They had that piped in. So it was pretty modern conveniences, then, in that . . .

EF: Yes. Yes, it was. Nine—it was built in 1911, which—the same year that my—that Major Newman died. And course, I joined it in 1926. It was a rather large house, and, as I recall, it [*rubbing sound on microphone*] with all the—all those inmates, [*SL laughs*] there were—there was—there were at first only two bathrooms: one downstairs in connection with a guest room and one upstairs that was for use by the family. And later on, another room was built over the kitchen, and that room was originally for my uncle. And I—it was the room that I inherited, and it was—it had a—its own bathroom. And it was separated from the rest of the house by an enclosed, screened back porch.

And it was absolutely perfect for a teenager. [*SL laughs*] I could play my radio as loud as I wanted to without disturbing anybody but the neighbors, I guess. Wouldn't disturb the rest of the household. I—there was a back door that—there was a screen door that I had a key to, and I rigged—there was no bell to punch, so I rigged up a regular bell that you ring by hand with a line that came up from near the back door to—the bell was at my end in the room. I kinda notched the screen a little bit so that a friend of mine could come to the back door—not disturb anybody in the house—pull on this string, and I would know that he was there. So—and I had my own key to the back door, so that was . . .

SL: That was ideal.

EF: [*Laughs*] It really was.

[01:15:22] SL: When it came time for—did the family always eat dinner together? Was there a specific time when everyone gathered at the table? Was . . .

EF: Yes, I . . .

SL: You were expected to be on time and . . .

EF: Yes. Mh-hmm.

SL: And when that—around the table, was there ever any prayers, or was there any kind of—what was the role of religion in the house

when you were growing up?

EF: There frequently was a grace said before a meal. My great-grandmother, as I have said, was Episcopalian. Her daughter—my grandmother—one I called "Othermother"—was an Episcopalian. My mother was an Episcopalian. My father was an Episcopalian. I was brought up in the Episcopal Church. My grandfather was a Baptist. He was from Kentucky. He was a Baptist. And Gordon, the other of his sons, was raised in the Baptist Church. So my grandfather and uncle were Baptists and the—and my father and mother and the—and my two siblings and I were raised in the Episcopal Church.

[01:16:52] SL: Well, that didn't cause any problems, did it? I mean, y'all still—I mean, it seems like to me that—I mean, there wasn't any problem with dancing or—I know the Baptists don't really think that dancing—or, you know, the strict Baptists wouldn't dance, and they certainly would never drink and all of that. I mean, was that—was there some kind of—the house wasn't divided in any way.

EF: I—the—there was—my grandfather was a teetotaler. And accepted liquor ads in the newspaper—got into trouble with the First Baptist Church on that account. He had been a deacon. I think he was asked—there was a—as I recall the family story, I

think he was asked to stop running liquor ads, and he declined, though he was a teetotaler himself, and I think there was some question whether he was gonna be allowed to continue in the church. My—I'm not certain of this, but I believe that he was obliged to give up his deaconship but was allowed to stay in the church. And the pastor—if memory serves, the pastor's name was Perry Webb, and he was supposedly a very good orator—very—and he had been a close friend of my grandfather's. And as I recall it, even after this controversy, they remained close friends. At—my father was—would have an occasional drink. It—the time came when he had a little alcohol around the house, but he was never much of a drinking man. My mother was not—she didn't drink. My uncle, I think, drank some. I'm sure he drank some. But it was—I do recall this, though. I recall not precisely when it was, but I remember going to the movies on a Sunday and I—and thinking that I was doing something that was different that I hadn't been doing before. And I think the—I think, by and large, the stores were all closed on—I think the markets were closed on Sunday in those days. And right—there musta been a time when I didn't feel free to go to the movies on a Sunday.

[01:20:06] SL: Well, did you attend church every Sunday, growing

up?

EF: Pretty much. Yes. And I was an acolyte—Trinity Episcopal Church. And I became crucifer to lead the choir in and out. And as a acolyte, I would—one of my duties for some period of time was to get to early service—I wanna say something like seven o'clock in the morning—and assist the—rector in—nowadays they pretty much call 'em the priests—in the Communion by pouring the wine and the water for him to bless, and so forth. You know.

[01:21:06] SL: So did you just keep [*tapping sounds*] up with that all the way through high school? Did—were you active in the church? Was there any youth organizations that were church based that . . .

EF: It—there was a . . .

SL: . . . you were obliged to or . . .

EF: There was a young churchmen's organization, and I was active in that for a time. The time came—I think I was about fourteen or so—the time came when there were certain parts of the belief system that I was no longer able to subscribe to. But I didn't leave the church or any—anything of that sort. But I became aware that I couldn't subscribe to the notion of eternal punishment. I didn't—I—it [*chair squeaks*]—I remember thinking that a loving Divine Father—eternal punishment

delivered by such a being—I couldn't imagine my very mortal father consigning anybody to that sort of a thing, and it began to strike me as something that I couldn't subscribe to. And I haven't been goin' to church for quite some time now, except for a funeral or that sort of thing. Occasionally, I attend—I very occasionally have attended a service at a synagogue here with my wife. I have—one of my dearest, recent friends was Richard Millwee, formerly of Pine Bluff and more lately of Little Rock. And he was a—an Episcopal minister—a priest—and he was—he became one of my very closest friends. We had many wonderful times together. And he asked me how I considered—what I considered myself to be, and I told him that I considered myself to be a reverent agnostic.

[01:23:35] SL: [*Laughs*] That's good. That fits a lotta people, I think. That's good. So let's see—I've thought about—what about—let's get back to the house a little bit. Were there ice deliveries every day—every other day? Do you remember the ice truck coming and . . .

EF: I remember the ice wagon drawn by a horse. I don't think it was mule. I think it was a horse. And that was a—we had a—we got ice some for a cooler—a water cooler. We had a refrigerator—I—it's the earliest thing I remember. I don't remember when we

had simply an icebox for the food. But many people did have iceboxes. And I smiled when you mentioned that because it was a great occasion for us kids to—when the iceman came and threw the tarp back on his load of ice and—then—and chipped out a twenty-five- or a fifty-pound piece. There were always slivers of ice in the hot, hot summertime with no air-conditioning, and the kids would—after he would start delivering that piece of ice, we would get up there, and we'd get those slivers of ice, and that was a great occasion.

[01:25:25] SL: Well, I mean, they—air-conditioning back then involved, actually, fans blowing across ice. Is that the way it was in Pine Bluff? Did they air-condition, like, the theaters that way—do you remember?

EF: The theater—as I recall it, the theaters was the first to have air-condition—actual air-conditioning. At our house, we had a big exhaust fan in the attic. And that came on at night after the outside air had begun to cool. We'd open up the windows in the downstairs part of the house, and then that was a—it was a big, powerful fan that blew all that heated air out and brought in the cooler outside air. [*Clears throat*] Excuse me.

SL: Did the house do its own laundry—hang up the line on—the line for to dry to clothes? Do you—were you ever a part of any of

those kinda chores? What kinda chores were you given around the home, if any?

EF: Well, I was expected to keep my room and my belongings in a orderly fashion. I was given jobs that—going here and there to fetch things for—sometimes for my parents, sometimes my grandparents. Once in a while, I—it was always a joy to do that for my great-grandmother. I—one thing that was a regular thing in the season—between the—well, we had some pecan trees in the backyard. And my great-grandmother—in the—I guess, around the Christmas season, regularly baked what she called not fruitcakes, but pecan cakes that did contain no cherries or anything like—but did cane—contain raisins or currants or some—I guess it was raisins that had to be pitted if you couldn't get them already pitted. And the pecans had to be cracked and picked out, of course. And my great-grandmother and I did that together on several seasons. That was kind of a—but one of the things that we did together, we had a—one of those nutcrackers that clamped onto the edge of a table, and then it had a handle, and you could spin the handle. And the—and one part of the jaw was fixed, and the other part would move in by that spinning handle. And I cracked one after the other—pers—the appropriate amount of cracking, so that you didn't just smash

everything, but it was still pickable.

SL: Yeah.

[01:28:58] EF: And then—and she would begin picking. And then when I finish, why, I would join her, and we would pick those out together, and then she would have the—what she needed to bake the pecan cakes. Also, no—a friend of mine in the navy—'cause I was sent one of these—it was after my great-grandmother had died, but my mother continued that—my friend in the navy said—called it whiskey cakes. [*SL laughs*] And there was a family story about my mother going into a liquor store, which is something that she didn't do, in order to get some I. W. Harper because I think that was the recipe that my [*laughs*] great-grandmother used—I. W. Harper bourbon for the cake and was [*unclear words*] somewhat embarrassed, and when she was getting to pay for it, and so she felt obliged to say to the proprietor—said, "This is very good cake whiskey." [*SL laughs*] And he—he's supposedly said, "Yes, ma'am, and pretty good drinking whiskey, too." [*Laughter*] [*RR coughs*]

EF: Yeah.

[01:30:22] SL: Well, it sounds like to me that alcohol was not a factor in your-all's home, growing up—that it just wasn't around much.

EF: Not a great deal. But despite the—all the Episcopalians present.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

EF: I—as I began to be a lapsed Episcopalian [*SL laughs*] and no longer had that in—that incentive to [*laughs*] drink, that's when I began to drink some.

[01:30:54] SL: Well, so let's see. I think we still have you in grade school, and you were a pretty good student. And was there any particular teacher that you were particularly fond of in grade school that maybe—it sounds like to me that, early on, this—the newspaper culture was around you a lot, and you just kind of absorbed that and your interest in reading early on and being able to do so early on and you elevating yourself maybe a year ahead of everybody your age—was it just the English and literature that you kinda grabbed hold of? Was there—did you—I guess what I'm askin' is that all that came from the family influence. Was there a teacher early on that kind of turned a bulb on for you as far as schoolwork and learning?

[01:32:01] EF: I think, early on, it was Mrs. Fulgham in that first two years.

SL: In that private school.

EF: Mh-hmm. I think that—she seemed to be seriously interested in learning, and she was such a nice person. I think that had a

quite an influence on me. In—it—I remember having teachers that I liked and respected in grade school, but the first—except for Mrs. Stitch that I mentioned, and she was my homeroom teacher. The first teacher that af—I—whose name I really remember, and favorably, was Mrs. Drew White, and this woulda been in junior high school. And she taught English, and she was quite interested in poetry, and she had us memorize some poetry. I think that was done a fair amount in those days in school. And I remember she assigned one poem that I really did not like. It was—I think it was beyond my [*laughs*] job description at the time. It was "Thanatopsis." And I told Mrs. White—I really didn't wanna learn that poem. And she said, "Let's—that's all right. You just pick three other poems and learn—[*SL laughs*] those three poems." [*Laughter*] And I did that.

SL: Oh no!

EF: That—I did that.

SL: That kinda messed up her lesson plan. [*Laughter*]

[01:33:56] EF: But she—but I had a lot of regard for her. I thought she was an excellent teacher. And in those days, there were some—there were very few careers open to—that were readily open to women. And you could work for the telephone

company. You could be a nurse. You could be a schoolteacher. Maybe a few other things, but it weren't—there were not many obvious places for them to work. One of the results of this—one—I was the beneficiary of this unfortunate practice, because some well-educated widows who needed a—an income, who mighta been able to carry on any kind of a career, it—just took up school teaching. And it—it's because that was available.

SL: Right.

EF: And we—and I was the beneficiary of that and—of that, as I say, unfortunate system.

[01:35:19] SL: What about—had you always—when did you start reading the newspaper?

EF: I don't remember. [*SL laughs*] It was a—early on. But I don't wanna give the impression that I—that the newspaper was a—the utmost important reading for me for a long—of—from earliest time. It was—I read things like *Bomba the Jungle Boy* [*SL laughs*] with a whole series of them that—the continuing title of one of 'em was—Bom—was *In the Land of Burning Lava*. I have a couple of 'em in there that—I—not left over—my son-in-law tracked some *Bomba the Jungle Boy* books down and sent 'em to me. But I would say not at the apex in terms of quality writing. I—there was also a—an East Indian writer that I liked to

read a lot. His name was Mukerji [pronounced MOO-ker-jee] or Mukerji [pronounced moo-KER-jee], and he wrote about animals, and he wrote about a pigeon, and the name of that book was *Gay-Neck* [*SL laughs*] because it had a—an iridescent neck. And one of the fruits of that is I rai—as a kid, I raised pigeons for a while. And then the time came when I was interested in things like *Ben-Hur* and *Ivanhoe* and some poetry. And—but it was—I was not—by no means was I always an advanced reader. [*Laughs*]

[01:37:31] SL: Okay. What about—you did have an interest in scouting, though, didn't you?

EF: Yes, I did. I had an intense interest in scouting.

SL: Well, let's talk about that. When did that start?

EF: There was a—it started in connection with the Trinity Episcopal Church.

SL: Okay.

EF: One of the parishioners there took on the job of scoutmaster. Carville Fitzhugh . . .

SL: Kay.

EF: . . . was his name. And I think he worked for the power company—Arkansas Power and Light Company. He lived in a tiny house. Very, very nice, fair-minded, decent man. And he

took this job on and did an excellent job as scoutmaster. And I became interested on account of him and the other kids in the church that he was attracting. And I—you had to be twelve years old to be a Tenderfoot Scout. And you had to be—and that was the lowest rank. And I started goin' to the meetings when I was eleven, and on—by the—by my twelfth birthday, I was ready—I became a Tenderfoot Scout 'cause I already knew all the—and then I—there were time limits for each additional step upward—some months or whatnot—for Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle. [01:39:24] And then beyond that, Bronze Palm. And on each of those steps, I was ready for the next thing as soon as it—the time—required time was up. But by the time I reached Eagle, I was fourteen, and I was just fourteen, and as I recall it, they had a court of honor where the—these things were awarded, and they—because I was so young, they [*chair squeaks*] put me off for at least a month. It may've been longer than that before they allowed my mother to pin an Eagle badge on me. And in that connection, there was an o—there was an older boy who must've been, I would say, at least two or three years older than I was who lived across Main Street from me, Otis Laney Jr. And I talked—he had not been a scout, and I talked him into—to joining. He was not—he didn't

belong to the—to that church. But he joined. And we did these things together. We moved up, and he became an Eagle Scout, as I recall, at the same time I did. And we worked together on a lot of the projects.

SL: So you kinda had a running buddy there as far as . . .

EF: Yeah.

SL: And scouting brought that for you.

EF: Yeah.

[01:41:01] SL: So you did a bunch of campin'?

EF: Yeah.

SL: And so were you ever enamored with rivers or the—was—the thing that was most attractive to—what was most attractive to you about scouting that . . .

EF: I think camping was one of the things—one of the important things. My wife may be surprised to hear me say this—that I wanted—one of the required merit badges was cooking, [*SL laughs*] and I was interested in learning about campfire cooking. The outdoor activity and the camping—those appealed to me a lot. Boy—learning the Boy Scouts' pace—the fifty steps walking and fifty steps jogging and fourteen-mile hikes to get—I guess it was—I guess that was hiking merit badge. There was also a printing merit badge, and I went down to the office, and I did

some printing with one of the small presses to help fulfill those requirements. I went to Camp Quapaw, somewhere between here and—on the Saline River, somewhere between here and Hot Springs. And that was a very interesting experience. I think that was just a—I think it was just a week at a time. It may've been as long as two weeks, but I think it was a week at a time. We had cabins, and we had inspections, and we had various tests—outdoor tests and activities and that sorta thing. I remember in a—athletics merit badge had certain requirements, and they had the categories—the strenuousness of the expectations varied by weight. And the first category of weight was seventy-five pounds and under, and the next category was [*chair squeaks*] seventy-six pounds to whatever the next—and I weighed seventy-six pounds, so I had to go in the second category. [*Laughs*] I remember that.

[01:43:47] SL: Was there any memorable scouting function—I guess, goin' to Camp Quapaw was—where you could gather a number—you could work on merit badges all week and really concentrate on advancing your level in scouting or . . .

EF: Some of that, but mostly it was not focused on merit badges though swimming was certainly a merit badge. But we didn't—at least I didn't when I was there—swim for the merit badge.

We went swimming regularly, and we did handicrafts, and we made hikes. Yeah, it was there—it—yeah, there was some of what you're talking bout, too, because it was there that I did my fourteen-mile hike, which was a requirement for . . .

SL: The hiking.

[01:44:45] EF: . . . for—mh-hmm. And I was quite young when I first went there. I think I was there at least two years—maybe longer than—maybe longer than two years. But it—one thing that was very unusual—they had a awards ceremony. They—honor camper and then the two lower categories. And to my enormous surprise, I—they—my first week at camp—I mean, the first time I was at camp, they awarded me the honor camper thing. I guess I kept my—I [*laughs*] guess I kept my bunking space very neat. But I—that was a big surprise to me. I had no notion about that.

[01:45:48] SL: So how old were you when you reached Eagle Scout, then?

EF: Fourteen.

SL: Fourteen. That's pretty quick. So . . .

EF: The one memorable thing that occurred at Camp Quapaw—I was inducted into what was called the Order of the Arrow. And among the thing that was involved in that was it was done at

night after a campfire ceremony. And those who had been selected then got in single file, and I think put a hand on the shoulder of the man in front—of the boy in front—and then were led out into the boondocks. [*SL laughs*] And the first one would be dropped off, and then they'd move on; and then the next one'd be dropped off, and they said, "We'll be—we be back for you in the morning." And we didn't have—weather was good. We didn't have tents, and we had very little, and so we'd spend the night—a night in the woods alone to—[*SL laughs*] probably not too many yards away, but we couldn't see one another. And so that was a kind of a memorable thing.

[01:47:06] SL: Yeah, that's a pretty good, little process to get your independence out there—get yourself confident that you could do that sort of thing. I'm—so I'm tryin' to—is there anything in junior high—is that—that's where the football coach kinda said, "You guys go off and play there." Was that the extent of your athletic involvement?

EF: No. My sport turned out to be gymnastics and, specifically, tumbling. There was a veteran who came to town for—I think he was originally from New York—and he had—he was a—he told us that he had been a sergeant major in the Marine Corps. World War I. And he began to teach tumbling to a friend of

my—of a couple of brothers who were friends of my brother and mine. We were about the same age. It—the older brother and the younger brother were about ages of my brother and myself. And my br—my kid brother was there first, and a—he had 'em dig a pit in a vacant lot near the house of one of our friends and filled it with sawdust. And rigged up a belt with metal swivels on either end—a leather belt with metal swivels on either end and—to which ropes could be attached. [01:48:57] And so we began to—well, my brother said, "It was kind of fun. Why don't you come over?" And so I did then come over, and he taught us quite a few things about tumbling. And after a while, he realized that most of us were sons of veterans of World War I, and so he went to the American Legion and told 'em what he'd been doing and were they interested in sponsoring the Sons of the American Legion Tumbling Team. And they—he got an okay on it, so we then moved indoors, and we made our own mats. He—they—the coach got big needles and canvas and long pieces of felt. I guess with—I guess by this time, the American Legion was helping fi—buy these things, and then we'd stitched them up. He show—he showed us how to make these mats. We made several of the mats, and then we were able to work indoors so that the rain wouldn't bother us or anything like that. And I kept

that up for, I guess, it was a couple of years when I was in high school.

[01:50:19] SL: Yeah. You know, I just don't remember tumbling being on any—I—I'd never heard of a tumbling team or a tumbling competition at all, growin' up.

EF: We [*Roy Reed coughs*] did not involve ourselves in competition. I don't know of another tumbling team in the state.

SL: Yeah.

EF: But he would have us put on shows. I mean, at—we would—we—we'd each try to perfect one or two [*bird noise in background*] different tricks, and then he would choreograph it and tell us the order in which to do this. And so we would put on shows and then a few pictures that were made of us doing various things. And then we made appearances at several places around the state. I remember one of 'em was in Fort Smith. I think we stayed overnight at the Goldman Hotel, I think, at Fort Smith, and I don't know—remember what group it was that we—but we [*laughs*] put on shows several places around the state before I left.

SL: So how big was the team?

EF: I'd say ten or twelve.

SL: Wow. That's pretty big. [*Chair squeaks*] One thing about Pine

Bluff is that it had a very—and has always had, hasn't it—a very robust African American community with their own businesses and—which makes it kind of unique from other cities in Arkansas, didn't it? I mean, it seems like to me that Pine Bluff was always kind of ahead of the game as far as the black community goes—that they—there were businessmen, and I don't know, there just seemed to be a more active and sustained community to be found in Pine Bluff, and that was like no other in the state. Is that the way it—did—you probably—well, I don't know if you were aware of that, growing up, or not.

[01:52:44] EF: I was probably not aware of how Pine Bluff compared with other places in that regard, but I do remember—well, I'm not sure how far this goes back into my youth, but Harold Flowers was an important black attorney. Wiley Branton, a little bit later. Very important. George Howard, later a federal judge. Yes, various businesses, including eating places—eating establishments and other businesses. I guess the best-known tailor shop in town during that time was Malvin Moore. That was a black establishment. It's a—there was a black—oh, funeral home. Black funeral homes because the dead were segregated as well as the living. For that matter, I remember in the *Pine Bluff Commercial*, when we had "Deaths" and "Negro Deaths."

Separate even in the obituaries of the *Commercial*. But I can't say I was much aware of how that played out in other communities. Moving-picture theater. The Vester Theatre was for black people. I don't know that they would turn away white people, but the other theaters in town had segregated seating for black moviegoers.

SL: Upstairs in the balcony?

EF: I think I remember going with—musta been one of our servants. I think I remember going with somebody in the "Negro" section. They then called it—they didn't talk about "black" in those—it was the "Negro" section.

[01:55:23] SL: So when you went to the theater, did—you didn't sit with the "Negro" section, you sat downstairs with the whites or did you—were they . . .

EF: When I went with them?

SL: Uh-huh.

EF: No, I went with 'em to the black section. [*Laughs*]

SL: Did that cause any eyebrows to raise or . . .

EF: I—not that I'm aware of. I don't think this was a regular thing at all. I remember having done it, but I don't think it was a regular—but I don't remember any eyebrows being raised about that. And, of course, they were—a lot of youngsters had been

raised in part by black women as nurses or nurse—that sort of thing. So that was a—course, there was a—people were used to seeing that sort of thing all the time.

[01:56:21] SL: It was comfortable. It was comfortable segregation.

EF: Yeah.

SL: There wasn't any real animosity early on, was—were there?

EF: Not that I was aware of. [*Chair squeaks*]

[01:58:32] SL: Well, so let's get you in high school. Or—what about dating? When did you first start paying attention to girls?

EF: I think before I left elementary school. There was no such thing as dating but going over to the girlfriend's house visiting and that sorta thing. And . . .

SL: In elementary school?

EF: Yeah, I think [*SL laughs*] so. I remember that my—the first girl that I remember admiring a lot, like many of the others, rode a bicycle, and I rode a bicycle, too. And I think I rode a bicycle with her some. And I went to see her occasionally at her house, and she happened to have the same initials that I had, so I would occasionally put *E-F* plus *E-F* . . .

SL: *E-F*. Uh-huh.

[01:57:43] EF: . . . and let people wonder about that. Yeah, but the—not—oh, once in a while—no dating, but once in a while,

arranged to meet down front in one of the movie theaters. So we'd sit side by side in the—in . . .

SL: Do you remember your first date?

EF: Well, this is not what you're getting at, but they're—what . . . [*Beeping sound in background*]

SL: Well, no. [*Laughter*] It could be.

EF: It was only nominally a date. I—as a youngster, I was in—there was a thing called a Tom Thumb Wedding, and apparently this was done many places, not just Pine Bluff, where they'd go through a play of—they would make—have a—an artificial wedding, and at—somewhere there's a picture of me with a—something that looked vaguely like a tuxedo, and of course, there would—had to be a bride, too. So it was, in a sense, a date, but in a normal sense, not a date, so it . . .

SL: That's interesting. I've never heard of such a thing.

EF: [*Laughs*] Yeah. I don't think that was peculiar to Pine Bluff, but I'm not sure.

[01:49:12] SL: Hmm. Was that a cotillion or Junior League . . .

EF: I don't . . .

SL: . . . sponsored thing?

EF: I don't remember. My grandmother was a bit of a socialite, I guess you would say, and a social arbiter. She was a—she

apparently inherited a—an interest in the theater from her father, Major Newman. And she would do recitations and take part in plays and direct amateur groups and that sort of thing.

SL: Now that was your grandmother?

EF: Yes, my grandmother. My father's mother.

[02:00:08] SL: Did your mother have any interests other than raising the kids and helping at the house? Did she get involved civically or with . . .

EF: Yes, she belonged to—well, she was active in the church. She also belonged to a club called the—I think it was called the Junior Mathontes Club—a social club. Maybe they did readings, too. I'm not sure. She, I think, succeeded her mother-in-law as—in what I guess was the most prestigious of the ladies' clubs in town, the—and, I think, the oldest—the Hawthorne Book Club. And my recollection is that they were—my—there were eighteen members, all women, as I understand it . Eighteen members. And you joined—if, when you were invited, only after one of them was deceased. [*Laughs*]

SL: Wow.

EF: And [*laughs*] I know that my grandmother—and they took turns in hosting the meetings, and I know that my grandmother hosted a number of those meetings at our house. And I—I'm

not sure whether my mother did or not, but she was—she became a member. I think she followed my—her mother-in-law.

[02:01:55] SL: What about bridge? Anyone play bridge in your house? Any social gatherings of that nature?

EF: I don't think there were—I don't think there were any bridge players. I'm not certain about my uncle. A few card games, I believe, like hearts, solitaire, and I . . .

SL: But there weren't couples that would come over for a bridge party or contract bridge or any of that?

EF: No.

SL: Let me think here for just a second.

TM: Scott, let's change tapes real quick.

SL: Okay. Sounds great.

[Tape stopped]

[02:02:45] SL: First business we wanna take care of is we had a computer problem with that wonderful story about the Robert E. Lee statue in Richmond. Can you tell us again what—how that came about—how that statue got put where it is?

EF: Yes, it is a story that my mother told. As I said, she grew up in Richmond, Virginia, and went to school there. And there was a principal street in Richmond called Monument Avenue, and it has a series of monuments along the street in the median of

important people, including a number of Civil War veterans. And, of course, Lee is there. And my mother told the story that when she was a schoolgirl, she and her [*SL coughs*]—the other schoolchildren were asked to participate in the placement of that statue in—on its pedestal in—near its pedestal in—on Monument Avenue. And they had rigged it up with large ropes, and the schoolchildren manned the ropes, and on signal, they pulled. And they finally—I'm sure, with other assistance, but they were all involved in pulling that statue into position on Monument Avenue just to be there from now on. And she would never forget that, and I'm sure that's true of the other schoolchildren—and the citizens of Richmond as well.

[02:04:41] SL: Wow! What a scene. I wish there was, like, a photograph of that or something. It seems like that would've made the news.

EF: It may have. I . . .

SL: It seems the local paper would've—at least one of the local papers would've carried that.

EF: That they may well have done.

[02:04:55] SL: May have to look for that. [*Clears throat*] I'm just gonna try and catch up a little bit. There's a—you wanna talk to me about learning to fly an airplane?

EF: All right. When I was in high school, there was a US Army Air Corps training field outside of Pine Bluff called Grider Field. And there, they used a PT-19A—Fairchild PT-19A's as their primary trainer. And one of the civilian instructors there—a man by the name of Ford—on his own owned a Piper J-5, otherwise known as a Piper Cub—75 horsepower. And he was offering flight instructions to anybody who was interested. And at—my interest in flying, I think, pretty much began when the commanding officer of that school appeared at a high school assembly program. His name was—he was Captain Spicer, and he was a nice-looking man. He was very trim. He—his uniform was impeccable, and when he went up on the stage, I couldn't help observing the impression he seemed to be making on all the young women in the [*SL laughs*] class. And I learned from his talk that he was a West Pointer and then had gone to, I believe, Randolph Field get his wings, and all that—and particularly the interest in the young women—I said, "That's what I wanna be." And [*laughter*] so I decided then if I could figure out a way to do it, I'd—I probably would like to go to West Point and later become a flier. Well, that didn't happen, but I did get interested in flying, and I did take those lessons. And I—at that time, you had to have eight hours of solo—of dual

instruction before you were allowed to solo. I understand that that's no longer the case. Whatever it takes, I think, nowadays, they say—but, anyway, I—[*paper shuffles*] mostly before school, but sometimes on weekends or maybe after school, once in a while I would go out to—Tony Field [*RR coughs*] is a grass field—for my lesson, and [*RR clears throat*] I finally amassed the eight hours, and he said I was ready. And I soloed, and I only soloed for about an hour and a half. I mean, not on one time—altogether, I only soloed for about an hour and a half before they converted the field into a cow pasture, and that was over with.

[02:08:25] SL: [*Laughs*] Well, so you never flew again? You never piloted a craft again?

EF: I may have taken the controls of some navy plane as a part of a training thing with somebody else in charge. But no, I never acted as pilot again. My favorite air—I got quite interested in military aircraft. Particularly, US military aircraft. And my hands-down favorite of all aircraft was the Lockheed P-38 Lightning, a twin fuselage. They were in several versions. The main interceptor version was a ?single-place? [EF edit: pilot-only] plane. Late—I—much later on, [*clears throat*] I learned that there were some of those that were still in flying condition, and there was an outfit called the Confederate Air Force, which

later became rename—was renamed to Commemorative Air Force—and they had—one of their members had a P-38, so I—and it had a jump seat rigged up behind the pilot but under the canopy, and I talked my way into a ride on that. I never piloted it, but I did get—did have a ride, finally, in the—my all-time favorite airplane.

[02:09:53] SL: Those were unusual looking. They had two fuselages, right?

EF: That's right.

SL: And so what were the advantages for doing that? Why—what made that design desirable? I mean, what were its strengths? Was it . . .

EF: I think one of the main thing—they wanted a high-altitude fighting plane. It had a turbo supercharger on it. And that allowed it to go high. They wanted a fast airplane. They also wanted a—an airplane that could extend its operating radius consi—they wanted a—one that could stay in the air a long time so it could be more useful in escorting bombers to targets. And it was used in the European Theater some and in the North African Theater, but mostly it was used in the Pacific Theater. And it happens to be that airplane that was flown by the top American ace of all time, Major Richard Bong with forty kills.

SL: Wow.

[02:11:07] EF: I understand, too, that [*paper shuffles*] Charles Lindbergh—they were seeking—the government was seeking any information they could get about increasing the operating radius of this airplane, and they used him. He had some real experience in long flights.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

EF: And they—and he operated in the Pacific in that plane. He was under orders, as I understand it, not to engage in combat. But I understand that he did, on at least one occasion, engage in combat. I think I was informed that he shot the other plane down. He was getting up in years by that time, I guess, a bit. But anyway, he was helpful to the government at that time in extending a flight radius.

[02:12:04] SL: [*Clears throat*] Let's see here. Looks like you have some—did you develop your interest in canoeing early on?

EF: I did some canoeing in scout camp on the Saline River, but not really.

SL: Right.

[02:12:27] EF: I got interested in canoeing and was introduced to the Buffalo River by a young army doctor from New Jersey [*laughter*] who was stationed at the Pine Bluff Arsenal at that

time. He was ten years younger than I was, and he was able to borrow a canoe from—they had a recreation center at—there, and he was able to borrow a canoe, and he had had some cold-weather camping experience, and he went to Dartmouth, and they have a big outdoor program. And so he said, "Let's go up there and canoe the Buffalo." And so I said, "Okay." And that—and we did that during a cold snap in the latter part of January. I was thirty-nine at the time; he was twenty-nine. And it was a three-day, two-night out time, and we didn't carry a thermometer with us, but we checked later, and on those two nights I think the Gilbert reading was fourteen for the . . .

SL: Oh!

EF: . . . first night and twenty-two for the second night. We spent the night in a lean-to type tent, which he had stitched up, open front—in front of which we made a fire and hoped that we got more heat than smoke into the tent.

SL: [*Laughs*] That's right. That's pretty good. That's big adventure. Okay, so I wanna get back to—[*chair squeaks*] we had you in high school, and we had you—before our lunch break, [*TM clears throat*] we had you startin' to talk about your interest in the girls and when girls kind of entered your life. And let's see, I think you talked about meeting someone at the theater, and you

talked about the marriage thing—a wedding ceremony for little kids that . . .

EF: [*Laughter*] Yeah, Tom Thumb Weddings.

SL: Tom Thumb Weddings. [*EF laughs*] I've never heard of such a thing. But really—what did you do on—for a date in Pine Bluff? I would assume it was like anywhere else—go to the theater, see a movie, go to the drive-in, get a Coke—burger.

EF: That—that's exactly right. That was the usual thing. Of course, there was a occasional dance by one of the groups, but the usual date was just what you described—go to the movies and, oh, occasionally be—on a pretty day, maybe a picnic out some nice spot. But a movie and a—maybe a bite to eat or a Coke or something was the usual.

[02:15:36] SL: What kind of movies were playing back then when you were in high school? Do you remember? [*Belches*] Excuse me.

EF: I think it was—I remember very well seeing *Gone with the Wind*, and I think that may have been [19]39. [Nineteen] thirty-eight or [19]39. I woulda been twelve or thirteen, if that—if those dates are correct. Tom Mix was big for the—there were serials. On—I guess, on Saturday there were serials that always ended with a very perilous situa—with a protagonist in a very perilous

situation, to encourage us to come back after that. It's hard for me to remember dates of—at all—of—some of the musicals. I remember Kate Smith in some of the things. I remember an old-time actor by the name of George Arliss that was at that time a favorite of my grandmother's, and I saw some of those. I can't remember the name. Oh, Edward G. Robinson and with his—some of his gangster-type pictures. I was aware of Dick Powell. I knew that he was from Arkansas. [*Chair squeaks*] I saw *Ben-Hur* early on. I don't remember who was in that. I saw *Robin Hood* early on, and the competing archer with Robin Hood had placed an arrow directly in the center of the bull's-eye, and then it was up to Robin Hood to best that. And he [*SL laughs*] launched an arrow, and it split the arrow that was in the bull's-eye.

SL: I remember that, too. [*Laughter*]

[02:17:58] EF: And then I saw some movie in which a west—a warrior of the Western part of the world met the—a—an Eastern potentate. And they were both armed with swords. They were not fighting one another. It may be that the—may be that one—may be that the Western warrior was a captive. Anyway, he—they were both proud swordsmen, and the potentate said, "Demonstrate the [*chair squeaks*] sharpness of your blade." And

so he put out a metal bolt, and he sliced through that metal bolt. And the potentate said, "I didn't ask you to demonstrate the strength of your arm but the keenness of your blade." And then the potentate took off a silk scarf and tossed it into the air—held his blade out, and it parted as it . . .

[02:19:10] SL: [*Laughs*] Oh! I think I remember that, too. [*Laughter*] So let's see—what year did you graduate high school?

EF: [Nineteen] forty-three.

SL: Okay. So now we've got another world war going, don't we [*whirring sound in background*] . . .

EF: We do.

SL: . . . at that time? And so you opted to—or somehow or another were able to go to the Naval Academy after high school? How did that come about?

EF: W. F. Norell was the representative of our district at the time. And he had the option, as other representatives did, to make appointments to the Naval Academy—to both of the academies. At that time, I was interested in going to West Point, as I had mentioned earlier. And I was barely—I was not quite seventeen when I graduated from—I was just a few days from seventeen. I graduated May the twenty-seventh, and I was seventeen on

May the thirty-first, so I was barely seventeen, you might say. And Norell told my father or my grandfather that he thought I was awfully young to go to one of the academies, and he suggested that I spend a year at one of the military academies. And there were three options at that time. Texas A&M had a four-year military course, and VMI did, of course, and The Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina. Well, my father was not keen on VMI. [*Chair squeaks*] [02:21:09] And I ended up going to The Citadel, the military college of South Carolina. And I went there for a year. And when I finished that—I had gone directly from graduation in May—I—as soon as the next quarter started—to The Citadel. So I finished my year there in, like, about March, so I had March, April and May before I turned eighteen—before I was eligible for signing up for the draft. And—oh, I must go back. Before I finished that year, I had a phone call from my father, and he said, "Mr. Norell has said that there's a problem with the appointment." He had promised a principal appointment to West Point.

SL: Yeah.

EF: And he said the—his appointee at West Point, who was scheduled to graduate and to make . . .

SL: Room.

[02:22:22] EF: . . . room for his next appointment there, failed one of his courses, but did well enough in the rest of 'em, so that they have given him the option to turn back and repeat the senior year—the first-class year. And he says, "However"—he said, "so that's gone." He said, "However, he is able to offer a principal appointment to the Naval Academy if you're interested." And he said—Dad said, "Think it over for a bit and let me know what you think." Well, I thought it over for a while, and I finally called him back, and I said, "Well, okay, I'll do that." [*Bell rings*] Then I got out, as I say, three months before I turned out, and I began to think about that. [*SL laughs*] And I decided, "Well, I'd like to be a navy aviator." And they had a program there for—[*chair squeaks*] people my—seventeen-year-olds, and that program, if you were admitted, they'd send you to college. I can't remember whether it was two years or four years at that time. And if you kept up your grades, and then you—they would send you to flight school, I guess, at Pensacola. And so I decided I would try for that, and I went to Memphis for the academic—the mental and the preliminary physical and interviews and passed with flying colors. And so they gave me a voucher to—by train to go down to Dallas for a preflight physical, and we said, "No problem." Well, it turned out there was a

problem. I hadn't been aware of it until I took a—what they called a coin-click test, which was not a click, but it ringed—one penny balanced on each of two fingers and together, and it gives a ring. They put me in a corner facing the corner and stood back, I don't know, thirty feet or so and said, "Okay, put your right hand over your right ear" and then—"okay, how many was that?" And I'd say, "Three." Then, "Okay, now put your—over your other ear and tell us how many we"—I didn't hear a thing. I didn't hear it. [02:24:48] And if I had known that I had a high-frequency hearing problem, it woulda been so easy to have put my hand over the other ear again and fake it. I—it woulda been so easy, but I didn't know it, and so that was out. So then I went over to the—to Little Rock, the Army Air Corps, and they had a pro—they had a program for seventeen-year-olds—a similar program. And they said, "We're interested in you, but the program is closed for seventeen-year-olds now. It's closed, but don't worry about it because it will open again the first of June." I said, "That won't help me. I'm gonna be eighteen on the thirty-first of May."

SL: Oh!

[02:25:41] EF: It's hard to believe, but that's exactly the way it was. Then I decided on the marine—[*laughter*] I decided I'd try the

Marine Corps and [*SL laughs*] I—they didn't have that kind of a program. If they did, I didn't know it. Well, it woulda been—probably woulda been a navy program. And they said, "Well, for the first time since the war started, we have our quotas filled for several months ahead." So then I went to the navy office, and there they would've taken me. I could've gotten in at that time. But I was interviewed by a navy lieutenant, and in the course of the interview, he learned that I had this appointment to the Naval Academy. And he spent about—he spent bout—probably had least ten minutes saying, "You have a principal appointment to the Naval Academy, and you're thinking about joining the gob navy?" [*SL laughs*] And I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Let me tell you, you are making a big mistake if you do that. I won't turn you down, but I would like to persuade you not to do that." [*Laughter*] This is a recruiter. [*Someone clears throat*] And so I'd—I paid attention to him, and I knew when—I knew that—I anticipated it when I went up to the Naval Academy for the final physical that I'd be rejected. My mother said, "Go on up there. Let 'em turn you away at the door." I went up there, and when they did the hearing test, they didn't use the coin click. They used a whisper test, and my hearing at normal range was twenty-twenty or what—however, their . . .

SL: Oh, wow.

EF: And so I was admitted to the Naval Academy. So that's a long story.

[02:27:30] SL: [*Laughs*] Well, so how long were you in the Naval Academy?

EF: In those days—this was wartime 'cause I entered in [19]44. Ju—summer of [19]44. And in those wartime years, they constricted their course from four to three years. They vastly shortened the summer cruises—training cruises and piled on the academics and gradu—they needed officers, so they wanted 'em out at—as soon as they could reasonably get 'em, and so I—I'm the class of [19]48, and at the end of the—during final exam week, as my—as a plebe year, they notified us that they were going to go back on schedule now, [*laughter*] and half of our class—the lower half, academically, was gonna be a four-year class—were gonna have an additional year there at the Naval Academy, and the upper half of the class was going to—fi—gonna graduate in [19]47 on the wartime schedule. Well, I felt myself to be very fortunate. I was really angry that the—that it came out during exam week—it—so that there was no way to do extra studying to try to—you know, it was too late, and I was angry about that. But fortunately, I was in the top half of the

class and graduated in—on—in [19]47. They—then called it [19]48-A and [19]48-B. We got back on schedule.

[02:29:12] SL: But you didn't—by the time you got out, the war was over?

EF: Yes. It—war ended in [19]45, and I graduated in [19]47. The war was long since over by the time I graduated.

SL: And so where—let's see. So you went back to Pine Bluff then.

EF: No. I had a—I had signed on—I was regular navy—USN. And my obligation was to serve [*SL sighs*] during the pleasure of the president unless sooner discharged by competent authority.

SL: Okay.

EF: And I spent two years with the fleet. And submitted my resignation, and they accepted it, [*chair squeaks*] so I left the navy in [19]49. I was stationed in—I was aboard a small aircraft carrier in the Badoeng Strait, and home port was San Diego. And we operated in the Pacific. And I might say this—not at that time, but when the Korean War broke out, I was—part of my mustering out of the navy was acceptance of a commission, USNR. And so when the Korean War came along, I was called—I was—[*clears throat*] excuse me. I was called back, and they sent me to another small aircraft carrier with—of the same class, as a matter of fact, so I felt a little bit at home.

SL: Yeah.

[02:30:53] EF: And I was aboard her for about eighteen months and . . .

SL: Wow!

EF: . . . and then I was released. I saw no combat. I was in Korean waters some of the time, entitled to wear a Korean-area ribbon and that sorta thing, but I didn't see any combat. I got a chance to fly as a passenger off of that . . .

SL: Aircraft carrier.

EF: . . . off of that aircraft carrier. That was [*chair squeaks*] the Badoeng Strait. This was my first duty ship. They—I forget now which plane—what type of plane it was, but it was a two-seater, of course, and I—from being in combat information center, I noticed that there was a particular pilot who was frequently the first to see a target. [*Chair squeaks*] So I talked to him and then asked him if he'd be—if they'd gave—give permission if he'd ever take me—be able to take me for a flight. He said, yeah, he'd be willing. So I [*SL laughs*] got permission, and I did make a flight with him. And let me tell you, from the air, a—they called 'em Jeep carriers—the flight deck of a Jeep carrier looks small, small, and . . .

SL: It is small.

EF: . . . [*laughs*] he—[*SL clears throat*] we landed perfectly. He caught the wire and—but—the—and then we got outta the plane, and the second plane that landed after us also caught the wire and—but there musta been a wind gust or something—it skipped across the deck, still being held by the wire—dropped over into the catwalk and hung there for a while, and something gave loose and dropped into the ocean. Fortunately, there was a DE escorting us, and both of the people were—got out of the plane. The plane, of course, was lost. But they were picked up, and they were not seriously hurt. And that—if that had been me, I would've—[*laughter*] I had so many headsets and straps on, I never woulda got outta that plane. [*Laughs*]

[02:33:33] SL: So was there anything about being in the navy that—did it just make you kinda miss Pine Bluff, and did you wanna get back as soon as possible? Or did you see a bunch of sights and travel the world and . . .

EF: We made it to Japan. Made it to Guam. [*SL sighs*] Made it to Hawaii. We never made it to Haiti. Went through the Panama Canal on the—my second tour. I spent most of that time in the engine room. I—my chief engineer finally said, "You haven't seen any of this. Go on up topside. I'll take over the—I'll take over your watch." And—but the—I did a good job. I got good

fitness reports. I got better-than-good fitness reports, but I didn't see the—I finally didn't see the navy as a career . . .

SL: Career.

EF: . . . for myself.

[02:34:29] SL: Now you had married June by now, hadn't you?

EF: No, after I—well, before my second tour, yes. I got out of—I resigned from the navy in [19]49. And I knew a fair amount about naval machinery and ordnance and gunnery and celestial navigation and things of that sort, but I felt the need of an education. [*Laughs*] Oh, electrical engineering—a bunch of that stuff. But—[*chair squeaks*] which was all in—interesting, but I didn't feel as though I was educated. So I wanted to get—I wanted to try to repair that to—so I went—by that time, I was—well, I had taken a correspondence course or two while I was in the navy, and one of 'em was from University of Chicago in philosophy, and I got interested in that. And so after I got out, I app—I'd considered applying—three schools: Harvard, Columbia, and University of Chicago. And my research, at that time, convinced me that Chicago had the finest philosophy department in the country and maybe in the world. And so I applied there. I applied only there. I had no idea at what level they would accept me if they accepted me at all. And they put

me in the graduate school. I got no degree. I hadn't gone there to get a degree. I didn't—at—I didn't plan to teach at that point. And I spent two years there, and in 1950, June and I were married and married in Chicago. [02:36:24] And we continued

to live in Chicago until I guess it was [19]51, when I got a call from my father—this may be getting ahead with things—but I got call from my father saying that our trade unions had gone on strike, and we were having—and that they were having a terrible time getting the paper out. And my younger brother was there and doing everything he could do, and they had a—he asked a few others and, thank goodness, my brother was gifted mechanically—in other ways, too, but he was gifted mechanically. The press had been left—it was not damaged, but they had changed what was called the cutoff on the press, which meant that instead of having the headline at the top and the . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Caption at the bottom.

[02:37:37] EF: It [*chair squeaks*] would cut off somewhere in the middle of the paper so you—you'd read the—you'd get started in the middle of a story, and then you'd finally end up with a headline and the beginning of the story, and it was that way throughout the paper. My brother contrived to get out a paper every day. I think one day it was eighteen hours late, but he

got out a paper every day. Finally found out how to change the cutoffs so that we—the—and so it—my father said, "If you see your way clear, we sure could use some help." So I—we came to—back to Pine Bluff at that time.

[02:38:19] SL: All right, before I turn you over to Roy here, I wanna know how you met June.

EF: Blind date. I had a roommate, and he was in the psychology department; I was in the philosophy department. And he knew her. She was in the psychology department. And he was—he thought she was a very nice person, and he said, "I—I'll—why don't you let me fix you up with a date?" And so he did. And I put on my double-breasted blue suit. [*Laughs*] I looked out of place, I think, at the University of Chicag—even in those days, and went to pick her up, and she looked me o—I had a car. I had a car. I had a car. And [*SL laughs*] she looked me over and—"Hmm. Sailor, huh?" "Sailor." "Okay." She'd been the—she'd been there for several years. She went to the college there.

SL: Yeah.

[02:39:23] EF: She was in the graduate school at the time. Said—so she suggested that we drive to Calumet City. I guess that's in Indiana. And she suggested that we go to a nightclub that

had a—some exotic dancers [*SL laughs*] thinking that that would certainly please a former sailor, I guess. And I remember when I was really impressed by her—[*laughs*] I ordered whatever it was—maybe a scotch and soda—and she ordered a glass of dry vermouth. And I said, "My goodness, I've never known anybody [*SL laughs*] who ordered a glass of dry vermouth. This is some kind of interesting person." [*Laughs*] So . . .

[02:40:14] SL: Well, that's good. So blind date, and you guys just never stopped after that. You just . . .

EF: We dated and nine—by bout nine months later, I proposed to her in Chicago, and she kinda [*SL laughs*] said yes. And then a bit after that, she seemed to be having second thoughts. And so I finally convinced her—well, I can't say that. I finally persuaded her that it was—it might be a good [*laughs*] idea, so she accepted, and that time it stuck.

[02:41:05] SL: Well, Ed, I've had a great time talkin' with you.

EF: Well, thank you.

SL: I'm gonna turn the mic over to Roy. Do you need to take—do you wanna take a break—walk around a little bit before you get started with Roy?

EF: Maybe I better not. I don't think I really need to. And then . . .

SL: Okay. All right. Roy, are you good? [*RR clears throat*] I'm

gonna put this mic—both these mics on you.

[Tape stopped]

[02:41:30] RR: I'm Roy Reed, and we're with Ed Freeman, and I'm picking up where Scott Lunsford left off. And let me start with something that you were saying to him just before the break—how you had met June, and you'd proposed marriage, and you said . . .

Dwight Chalmers: Sorry, I think the mic fell off.

TM: Oh.

DC: Sorry. I think it just took a tumble there.

RR: Fell off. Oh, Lord.

TM: Came unclipped.

DC: Let's see there. Okay. All right. Sorry bout that.

[02:42:15] RR: Anyway, you said you'd finally convinced her, and then you stopped and said, "No, I per—finally persuaded her." One of the first things I ever knew about you was that you were careful with words. Where does that come from?

EF: Care with words?

RR: Yeah.

EF: I guess—a desire to understand what I read and to make clear what I say or write, and I care about words. I don't consider myself any kind of an expert. I know practically nothing about

etymology, for instance, but I—words, to me, are important, and some of 'em are wonderful.

[02:43:10] RR: Hmm. One of my early experiences with you, in fact, had to do with my misuse of some word, and you had read this, and you called it to my attention. And I was shocked because I thought I was a pretty hot-shot reporter—[*laughs*] writer—[*EF laughs*] and here—and I'd like to think that you've made a better man out of me, so thank you very much for that.

EF: I was not aware of this, but you're more than welcome.

RR: [*Laughter*] Right. You spent quite a lotta time with your editorial writers in later years talking about not just words, but ways of expression, and I gather this was your style of editing. You—the editorials were sorta your special province when it came to line editing, I suppose. You did—like, Paul Greenberg would sit down with you at five o'clock every day. Was that a habit with all of the editorial writers that you dealt with?

[02:44:19] EF: I believe that it was. There've been—there were four during my time. Joe Stroud and . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . Pat Owens and Paul Greenberg and Bob Lancaster for a while. I—that was pretty much the case with—I think with all of 'em. It certainly was the case with Paul and with Pat. I think it

was Pat one time who said that I made him rewrite an editorial, I don't know, three or four times, and he's—he was being kind, I'm sure, but he said, "And every time it was better." And I don't think I was able to do much of a job with ordinary prose—with just mediocre prose. But it—but if I got hold of a piece of writing that I thought was meritorious—it was truly worthy—then I was on fire to see if it could be perfected. I—it—there was something about—there's something about excellence that just—that made me wanna do anything that could be done in—to make it perfect.

[02:45:51] RR: Is that a little bit of a teacher in you?

EF: I don't know, Roy. I—one of the things that I said about the people I wanted working with me is I don't want people working with me who can't teach me something.

RR: Oh.

EF: I wanna spend my time with people I can learn from.

RR: Yeah.

EF: And so I—it—I think it's—it was as much the other way as the way you're say . . .

RR: Well—[*laughter*] back—go back to the beginning of your time at the *Commercial*. I know you . . .

DC: Sorry. I'm gonna adjust this.

RR: Did it come out again?

DC: No, I just wanna bring it just a little [*RR clears throat*]. Okay.

[02:46:36] RR: I read somewhere that your first job at the paper was selling subscriptions. Is that right?

EF: That's right. I was selling subscriptions and collecting in the outlying areas—the out in the country, not in Pine Bluff itself. My—I was under the auspices of my grandfather. At the time, my father had a lot of illness in his life and was absent a fair amount of time. And [*unidentified sounds in background*] I was—I guess I was about fourteen, and I think you could be a learning driver at the age of fourteen then and if you had an adult in the car with you. Anyway, he turned me over to a fellow in the circulation department—had been there for—forever and who has just recently died at a hundred—maybe a little bit—hundred years of age. [My brother Armistead Freeman] Arms and I went to the funeral. Herbert West. And Herbert was the rural circulation manager and, in those days, it was really good practice to drive in some of the rutted—[*RR laughs*] and especially when it was—the weather was wet, roads or—in southeast Arkansas, it was—I learned to—I learned a lotta tricks in driving through bad roads and all with him.

[02:58:11] RR: I suppose you got stuck a few times in the mud.

EF: [*Laughs*] We had to get some help once in a while.

RR: Are you saying that this gentleman worked until he was a hundred?

EF: No, he continued to live . . .

RR: Okay.

EF: . . . in—he was a—I had not seen him. I had talked with him on the telephone in recent years. But I had not visited him. Armistead had visited him . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . at least once in recent years. This is—it—he died only [*telephone rings*] a couple a three years ago, I would say.

RR: Yeah.

EF: His brother also wor—his younger brother also worked for the *Commercial* for a long time. I . . .

RR: Oh yeah.

EF: But he died much earlier.

[02:48:55] RR: But this was the man who taught you or went with you as you began to sell subscriptions.

EF: Right, and to collect for subscriptions . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . out there.

RR: Were you a natural-born salesman? Were . . .

EF: No. [*Laughs*] I don't think I was at all.

RR: That was a loaded question, I'll tell you right up front. I can't imagine you as a salesman.

EF: [*Laughs*] I sold some subscriptions, but, no, I don't think I was a good salesman.

RR: Now I have a particular reason for [*clears throat*] asking that. I may be wrong, but I've always thought of you as maybe not shy, but retiring—not an extrovert. Is that a misreading?

EF: No. No, it's not. I think I'm much more nearly an introvert, and I think I could be called shy. I certainly could be called reserved or retiring. But if I'm feeling quite comfortable with old friends or that sorta thing, then I get—I feel sure that my personality changes a bit.

RR: Yeah.

EF: But, no, I think . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . I think you're right.

[02:50:23] RR: Well, at the risk of violating your introversion, do you have any idea why you're of this turn?

EF: I do have an idea. I'm not at all sure that my idea is correct, but as I just mentioned shortly ago, my father was sick much of the—a good deal of the time, and he had various problems. But

the most serious one was he was manic-depressive, and it was a—in those days, there was no such—I don't think they talked about nervous breakdowns in those days.

RR: Yeah.

[02:51:18] EF: And in those days, there was no psychiatrists in—as far as I know—in the state of Arkansas. And when he needed attention, he went to Miami. And my mother went with him, and they stayed there for some periods of time, and he was treated there. And I was some level of teenager, I guess, when he made an attempt on his life. Fortunately, he did not succeed, and I think that had considerable effect upon me at that time, and I . . .

RR: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Your father was called Wroe.

EF: That's right.

RR: *W-R-O-E*. Where does the name come from?

EF: All I know about that is that there was a Miss Wroe that—and I'm not certain that Miss Wroe was the family—well, it—I was told it was a family name and I—beyond that, I . . .

RR: Oh.

EF: . . . I don't really know.

[02:52:21] RR: Okay. I—I'm sure that a lotta people, like myself, who thought Wroe was spelled *R-O-W-E* or *R-O-E,* and it wasn't

till a long time later that I found there's a *W* in there. So there was a Miss Wroe somewhere [*telephone rings*] that mighta been—yeah.

EF: Hmm.

[02:52:41] RR: So your first job was selling and collecting for subscriptions, and I can imagine that collecting was just about as hard as [*laughs*] selling. I say that as an old paperboy and [*EF laughs*] collecting was always a problem, especially if you're shy a kid as I was. Did anybody give you trouble?

EF: I don't recall any real trouble. But in those days, a lot of plowing was done—done with a mule and if we couldn't see the person at the—that we were lookin' for in the farmhouse, we'd look around in the field to see—and chase 'em down in the field and see if we could get a interest or get a payment from him. We did a lot of that. I learned that when you approach a country house, at least in those days, you come up close to the front door, and the house is usually raised a bit. You knock on the porch, and you call out to—so that [*RR laughs*] you—they know that you mean to be seen and . . .

[02:53:47] RR: Mh-hmm. You're not there for meanness of some kind. [*EF laughs*] Did you ever take in produce or pigs or anything on payment for the paper?

EF: Yes. I remember my grandfather coming in with produce of various—corn or potatoes.

RR: Yeah.

EF: Various things like that as payment for subscription. I also remember one time—probably not payment for subscription—maybe payment for advertising—someone brought in a shotgun—a 12-gauge shotgun. And [*laughs*] I think I still have it. My father gave it to me later.

[02:54:27] RR: Really? [*Laughter*] Yeah. Hmm. Well, this woulda been—not Depression years or it mighta been toward the end of the Depression. You were fourteen in 1940, I guess, and the country was still in economic hard times. I—am I right about that? So . . .

EF: Yeah, I woulda been—yeah, fourteen. [*RR coughs*] Fourteen in 1940. Uh-huh.

RR: So cash was not always available to pay for the paper.

EF: That's right. And I—our biggest advertiser at that time, a dry goods store, I was told by my father, paid once a year for the adverti—our biggest advertiser. They paid in the fall after the crop was in, and money was beginning to flow a little bit.

RR: Yeah.

EF: Yeah.

[02:55:31] RR: Now after you came back to the paper again and settled into the—what was your first job after selling subscriptions—say, in the newsroom? Did you have the title of editor from the beginning?

EF: A—what kind of editor?

RR: Were you the editor?

EF: No, not to begin with at all. It—as a matter of fact, I don't know whether you're interested in this—my next job at the paper was as apprentice photoengraver.

RR: Oh.

[02:56:02] EF: And I did that for a while before I went to the—fore I went to the . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . the business end.

RR: All right.

EF: The news and editorial end of the paper.

RR: Yeah. Yeah.

EF: And before I—before—my uncle, at that time, had the title of managing editor. My father had the title of business manager. My grandfather, by that time, had died. He died in [19]45.

[02:56:26] RR: I guess you did work as a reporter for a while.

EF: I did. I did work as a reporter for a while, and I tried my hand a

little bit as a columnist as well. And then I think I was given the title of associate editor and helped my uncle. And that—then sometime later, my brother and I bought out our uncle's interest in the—bought his stock in the paper, which was a minority interest, and not too long after that, he retired. And so before long, I was—well, before that happened, I knew that it was upcoming, and I began to look for somebody who might be able to help. And I—with permission, I hired Joe Stroud from—originally from McGehee, and he was a special-assignment and political reporter and knew that if things worked out, I wanted him to be editorial page editor when that became possible for—for me to [*unclear word*]. And so that's how that got started.

RR: Mh-hmm. Did you get him at—from *McGehee Times,* or was he doing any kind of newspaper work before?

EF: I can't remember now what his . . .

RR: Well . . .

EF: . . . what his earlier background was.

RR: . . . that's all right.

EF: I can't remember that.

[02:58:31] RR: Speaking of Joe, this might be a good time to talk about one of your more illustrious alumni. He ended up, wasn't it, editor of the *Detroit Free Press*?

EF: That's right.

RR: Yeah.

EF: And I think he—they—I think they also made him a vice president as well . . .

RR: Right.

EF: . . . as well as editor of that paper and . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . and he . . .

RR: And he wrote editorials during his . . .

EF: Yes.

RR: . . . entire career.

EF: Yeah.

RR: And he got his start in that, I guess, at the *Pine Bluff Commercial*.

EF: As far as I know, that was the first time . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . he did that.

RR: He was good.

[02:59:05] EF: He—Walter Trulock of Pine Bluff, a well-known, old family of Pine Bluff, came to see me, and you'll have to supply the date. But Faubus was running again, and "Joe" Hardin, knowing he had no chance to win, nevertheless, thought he

ought to give people a—an opportunity to vote some—in opposition to Faubus, and he agreed to run for governor. And Walter Trulock knew him well. My—I had met him. My father knew him pretty well. And Walter came to me and said—not too long af—not too long after Joe had moved over as editorial page ed—"Ed, I know this is not gonna be congenial to you at all. I know you've been planning for this for a long time. But Joe Hardin needs him to work for the campaign. I know you're opposed to Faubus, and I'm—I would like to be able to persuade you to let him go and help Joe Hardin do whatever he can do." And I—with great reluctance, I said, "Okay." Okay. [*Laughs*]

RR: Yeah. Well, I gather you—[*clears throat*] you would've done quite a lot to oppose Orval Faubus. That woulda been in 1960, I think, when Joe Hardin ran. Does that sound about right—when Faubus was up for—or was it even a fourth term? He would—he was elected [19]54, [19]56, [19]58, and I'm thinkin' this was [19]60 when Joe . . .

EF: I'll have to go with you on that. I don't remember for sure.

RR: I'm not sure about it, but anyway, you had already made up your mind about Orval Faubus based on what?

EF: Well, based on his opportunism in connection with the fall of [19]57 things.

RR: Now y'all . . .

EF: However, I had liked Cherry the first time around, and I believe that we supported Cherry in that first race. But the thing that really cinched it for me was the—Faubus's action in the fall of [19]57 and beyond.

RR: Yeah.

EF: That was awful.

[03:01:58] RR: Did the paper ordinarily endorse a candidate for governor in every election? I'm thinking, for example, of [19]56, when Orval was running for a second term and was opposed by Jim Johnson. Do you recall that the paper took a stand on that election?

EF: This was in the . . .

RR: In the Democratic primary of [19]56.

EF: But wasn't there at least a third person in that primary?

RR: There was. That mighta been—no, Chris Finkbeiner ran—no, I think that was Chris Finkbeiner.

EF: At one point—well, it's my recollection that I—that [*RR coughs*] we never supported Faubus and that I never voted for Faubus, because, as I say, I liked Cherry to start with, and I think I voted for somebody who was known as Stu Prosser . . .

RR: Stu Prosser.

EF: . . . one time.

RR: Yeah.

EF: I . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: I think I voted for somebody named Whitten one time and Finkbeiner and Rockefeller and Rockefeller and . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . and [*laughs*] Bumpers.

RR: Yeah.

EF: I—it's my recollection that there was always a way to vote and still not vote for either [*RR laughs*] Jim Johnson or Faubus.

RR: So your record is clean as far as Faubus [*laughter*] is concerned. Oh. Well . . .

TM: Excuse me, Roy. I need to change tapes.

RR: Okay. [*Clears throat twice*]

[Tape stopped]

[03:03:08] RR: [*EF laughs*] Start—and mention Harry Pearson, and all that while you lead in—into that 'cause I've—I think Harry had a lot to do with the stories about the Buffalo, didn't he?

EF: He did.

RR: He did. And you editorially supported Faubus's—well, you tell about it.

EF: Well, as I say, I don't recall that we had very much good to say about Faubus editorially at all. The only occasion when we—that I recall that we praised him editorially was in connection with saving the Buffalo River. He declined to allow the Corps of Engineers to proceed with that, and we had some very favorable things to say about that position. We had a reporter at that time by the name of Harry Pearson [reporter for the *Commercial*], who was a character, and who became interested in the Buffalo River and the fight to preserve it as a free-flowing stream. And he canoed it some. I had canoed the—I can't remember when I first canoed the Buffalo, but I remember having canoed it with Harry at least once. And I thought it ought to be saved, and so we'd—we—it was unusual to—for us to send a reporter to spend lots and lots of time a couple of hundred miles from—we had no circulation whatever in that area. Northwest Arkansas—in northern Arkansas. But we turned Harry loose there and ran [*telephone rings*] many stories. And I would like to think that our support of that was helpful in getting it saved, and I'd like to think that our support also was encouragement that Simmons National Bank—I think that was before it was called Simmons First National Bank—had a bunch of billboards all around that showed a picture of a buffalo nickel, and the line was "Save the

Buffalo."

RR: That's great. [*EF Laughs*] That's great. Yeah.

[03:05:36] EF: Harry was—won some sort of—Harry got to know the—Neil Compton, and I think his name was Joe Marsh Clark, and the—Harold and Margaret Hedges, who were not Arkansans, but spent a lot of time . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . floating the Buffalo and the Mulberry and other Arkansas rivers. And he was—he won some sort—Harry Pearson won—our reporter won some kind of a—an award which—I think he was supposed to use to write a book about the river—some aspect of the river. He spent a lotta time on the river, but I don't think he ever published a book.

[03:06:16] RR: Yeah. Go back to [19]57 and the Central High crisis, when the governor called out the National Guard and temporarily, at least, blocked the integration [*clears throat*] of Central High. First of all, who was your editorial writer at that time?

EF: [*Sighs*] Fall of [19]57.

RR: That woulda been before Joe Stroud, I suppose.

EF: I think that it was.

RR: Maybe you were writing 'em yourself.

EF: [*Sighs*] [Pause] The—bef—Pat came there in about [19]62, I think.

RR: Yeah, and I'm not—I don't think Pat was at the *Gazette* even as early as the fall of [19]57.

EF: I think—he came into the *Gazette* because of Ashmore, I believe.

RR: Yes.

EF: And what the *Gazette* was doing.

RR: That's right. But I—but he—I'm pretty sure he had nothing to do with covering the story. And I—in fact, I don't think he was on the paper at that time. He—I think he probably came in [19]58. I'd have to check somewhere. But anyway, the . . .

EF: I think probably my uncle was writing the editorials at that time. I'm not certain, but I think my uncle was.

RR: And what was his name?

EF: Gordon N. Freeman.

[03:07:45] RR: Okay. You undoubtedly had something to do with [*clears throat*] the editorial policy that is taking issue with the governor over his actions. Where does that stem from in your own personal convictions or what—how did you decide on the question of integration—that, you know, there's a right way and a wrong way, and our governor'd chosen the wrong way—or am I reading too much into that? Were you an integrationist?

Knowing that was a bad word back then, but you know . . .

EF: I thought that—I would say that, editorially, it would be incorrect to say that we came out for integration. I would say that, regardless of how we felt individually, that I—the "we"—I'm thinking of myself and whoever was writing the editorials—and felt that the law ought to be obeyed, that not obeying the law was essentially rebellion, and that it was—I felt that it was fair to that it was unfair to place black people in inferior schools and not give them a—the same kind of a chance. I felt that way. But I would say we were pro-law rather than pub—editorially, rather than pro-integration.

RR: Now as the years went by, your paper became known for its very strong stand on behalf of civil rights for black people. How did that happen? How did that progress, and what was your own part in the paper's pro-civil rights stand?

EF: Well, I was in favor of civil rights. But when I was—before I came back to the—before I came back to Pine Bluff while I was still at the University of Chicago, I remember a conversation I had with a black student there and told him that when I left the school that I w—planning to head back to Pine Bluff and take a part in a family—in running a family newspaper, in time, after I learned enough to be of help. And I said that I'd been away

from Pine Bluff so long—school and navy—that I don't know a great deal about the mindset of the people there. And I remember his saying, "Well, I think when you get back, you're going to find that the churches are gonna be—they're gonna help get this thing done." And I was—in [19]50—[19]54, I'd been back, I think, less than a year from the navy after Korea, and when the [19]54 decision came down, and I didn't feel that I knew the pulse of the community very well . . .

[03:11:42] RR: That's the *Brown versus Board of Education* famous school case. Yeah.

EF: And I said I didn't know whether it was gonna be—I didn't know whether it was gonna be rioting. I didn't know what the reaction was gonna be. I didn't feel I understood the community that well. And I was reporting at that time, and I said, "Well, what can I do that's responsible journalistically, [*laughs*] but that is also likely to calm the waters?" And I guess somewhat with that black student's statement in mind, I decided that I would interview a bunch of—I can't remember whether I interviewed—I may not have interviewed black preachers. I can't remember for sure. But I know that I interviewed a number of white preachers. And that was kind of a surprise to me because some of 'em were pretty dead set on maintaining segregation. They

were—I mean, with vitriol. And some were very noncommittal. And there was one whose—who said, essentially, "Well, it's good to see the government coming around to the position that all good Christians have understood was the thing to do for a long time." And that was—[*laughs*] that—he was the only one that I recall that was absolutely straightforwardly outspoken about it, and that was Alvin E. Houser, and he was with the Christian Church.

RR: Disciples of Christ.

EF: Maybe. It's not the Church of Christ. It was . . .

RR: No, Disciples. Yeah. A liberal—yeah.

EF: He—and . . .

[03:13:52] RR: Did he keep his congregation? Did he keep his job?

EF: He—I think he did for a while. He did—I can't remember now how long he did, but he was—he did not believe in slugging the parking meters that we had by that time in—on some of the streets 'cause he said he was not parking for his own benefit, he was on the Lord's work [*RR laughs*] and didn't think he owed anybody for that. [*Laughter*]

RR: That's good. Well, by 1969—wasn't that the year that the paper won the Pulitzer Prize for . . .

EF: That's the year that Paul Greenberg won the Pulitzer Prize.

RR: Okay, it was Paul's—oh yeah—okay, for editorials.

EF: Right.

RR: Generally, on a ci—more than one, but having to do with the race issue.

[03:14:52] EF: Yes. Civil rights were an important part of it. George Wallace's—some—one or more editorials on George Wallace was part of it. As strange as it may seem, or maybe it doesn't—I don't recall having participated in the selection of the editorials that were submitted for that. I don't—if I—and I think I would re—would remember that. I don't recall having been asked to do that. I very much remember how I learned about Paul winning the Pulitzer. I was sitting in my office talking with a—an advertiser who was also a friend of mine, and I had two doors: one opened on the newsroom; one opened on the corridor. Paul's office was adjacent to mine. My door—the newsroom door was closed; the corridor was open. It usually was, unless I was having a private conversation. It was open. Paul came to the door—stuck his head in the door and said, "Oh, excuse me, I didn't realize you had somebody with you," and left. And then after my friend left, Paul came in and said, "Ed, I just wanted to tell you that I've been notified that I won a Pulitzer Prize."

[03:16:24] RR: That's good. That's good. [*Laughs*] Well, as I recall, he well deserved it, because even by the late [19]60s, it took a fair amount of courage for a Southern editor to take the stands that he articulated so eloquently. Go ahead and talk a little more about Paul.

EF: During—when—during the first year after Pat Owens came to work for us, he won at least three national awards. His job was editorial page editor, and he was the whole editorial staff, and that meant we were a seven-day-a-week paper. And that meant filling the editorial column seven days a week. That did not exhaust his energy, and he wrote columns from time to time, and he—I—he reported—did some reporting from time to time. His column, which he was—that was not part of his job description at all, nor was the reporting—won a National Political Science Association award. He won a Sidney Hillman award for something or other. He won a . . .

[03:18:02] RR: Well, now that musta been labor reporting.

EF: Reporting or maybe something editorially that he'd writ—I'm not . . .

RR: Oh yeah. Yeah.

EF: And . . .

RR: But maybe a prolabor point of view, though. I mean, they—the

Hillman award . . .

EF: You . . .

RR: . . . would not recognize, I would think, say, William F. Buckley, for his prounion stance. [*Laughter*]

[03:18:23] EF: No, I think that's probably right. And I remember Paul was—Pat was invited to receive his award someplace, and he went there prepared to raise hell with the labor movement. That—he—that—he would—he told me later. But when he got there, some earlier speakers had taken that theme on, [*laughter*] and so I don't know what he ended up saying, but it—but he was [*RR clears throat*] anticipating . . .

RR: This is Paul?

EF: No. [*Laughs*]

RR: Pat.

EF: This is Pat.

RR: Pat Owens. Pat. [*Laughs*]

EF: He planned to tell 'em what they—[*RR laughs*] what the movement needed and what they were doin' wrong.

RR: Yeah.

EF: But he'd been anticipated.

RR: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

EF: So, yeah. He had to modify.

RR: Yeah.

[03:19:01] EF: But anyway, the reason for—the reason for mentioning this is that the Nieman Fellowship is the other thing that Pat Owens won, and that meant that he'd be—if he—with the publishers consent, he would be at Harvard for nine months. And that would mean that we would be totally without a—an editorial [*whirring sound in background*] page editor—without an editorial writer. And so he and I had the chore of finding a temporary replacement to be—[*laughs*] to take on this pretty good-size job. Well, I think we—I think we answered an ad in *Editor & Publisher*, a trade publication. And [*RR clears throat*] we—I think Paul was in New York at the time. I think he'd been working for one of the lesser-known encyclopedias. Anyway, he came down for—he came down for a—an interview. And we both interviewed him at some length and checked his—those who recommended him, and we both saw—thought that he showed some promise. And so we asked him if he'd—to take the job, and he accepted.

[03:20:27] RR: Yeah. That's interesting on one particular count in retrospect. [*Clears throat*] Here, you have Patrick J. Owens, who, by any reckoning, would be considered quite far to the left of center in his political thinking. In fact, I think he probably

was still secretly a follower of the International Workers of the World. I mean, he was—he prided himself on being a Western liberal radical in his politics. And here was Paul Greenberg, who if judged merely by his editorial writing of the last quarter of a century, would be considered at the other end of the political spectrum. But in 1962, was there any other way of classifying people politically in the South except on the race issue—liberal or conservative? Was that the only issue that mattered in the South?

[03:21:41] EF: No, it was not the only issue that mattered. There were matters of good government, aside from the race thing. They—there were a number of other things that mattered—industrialization and the farm community, and there were any number. But certainly, during those years, I'd have to say that the race issue and the politicization of the race issue was, I think, the—I think was the paramount issue of all.

RR: Yeah.

EF: It . . .

RR: And Paul . . .

[03:22:37] EF: I—I'm sure that Pat and I disagreed about a number of things, and there probably were things about him that I was not aware of.

RR: Hmm. [*Whirring sound in background*]

EF: And Paul and I have certainly disagreed about a number of things. The—one of the principal things that we disagree about is his attitude toward pro-life. I'm pro-choice, and we—I'll put it this way: during the long years that Paul and I worked together, he never asked me to publish an editorial that I couldn't subscribe to. And I never asked him to write an editorial that he couldn't subscribe to. For the most part, that [*whirring sound changes to higher pitch*] that didn't mean other people wrote 'em. There may've been a few occasions where we differed on a political race or something. I don't call one up offhand. But if that sort of thing should happen, he could—he simply couldn't be in favor of a candidate that I thought the paper ought to support or the other way around. [*Whirring sound changes to even higher pitch*] Then it—with no hard feelings, we got somebody else to . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . to do that. I don't recall that's having been done. And, of course, I think that on that question—the race question—I think there was relatively little difference between me and Pat and between Pat and Paul . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . and Paul and me.

[03:24:28] RR: Yeah. When did Paul leave the *Commercial*?

TM: Excuse me, guys. I'm—we've got a pretty loud thing out there that if we can, I'm gonna see if we can have 'em . . .

RR: Sound like a vacuum cleaner or something, doesn't it.

TM: Yeah.

[Tape stopped]

[03:24:40] RR: Okay, I was—I think I'd just asked when Paul left the *Commercial*.

EF: Paul left the *Commercial* on three occasions, I believe. The first leaving of the *Commercial*—well, he did take the job as editorial page editor and did so all the time that Pat was gone. I have an idea—I couldn't prove it quickly—but I have an idea that Pat may have sent a few editorials to us from Boston—from Cambridge. But Paul handled the editorial page during that nine months. And I—we—as I had said earlier, Pat and I thought on the interview that he showed some promise. By that time, I was convinced that he did have promise, and so Pat came on back to the *Commercial* after his year at Harvard. And Paul stayed, but he was no longer the editorial page editor, of course. And Pat had the idea that no one should be—could be the right kind of an editorial page editor who hadn't spent a fair apprenticeship as a

reporter. [03:22:26] And Paul is a plenty good reporter, but he was not at all interested in reporting. He was interested in opinion. And despite the fact that, from my viewpoint, the two of them liked one another personally—respected one another's work, but couldn't get along—couldn't get along. And so Paul left, and I'm not sure whether that's the time he went to Chicago or not, but it—but there was two occasions when he left for a period and then returned. One of those, he went to work for, I think, the *Chicago Daily News*. I—and he was there for, I think, about a year, and I was in Chicago while he was there, and I picked up a copy of the paper. And I think by this time Pat had left. Anyway, I picked up the paper, and he had, I think, three editorials—a short—rather short editorials in that one paper that I picked up. And I—as I gave him a call and told him I was in town and that I would like to—if he had time, would like to have dinner together, and he said, "Yeah." And I said, "By the way, I really liked this one—this editorial and this one, but this one"—I don't know—something—he said, "Yeah, they really butchered that one." [*RR laughs*] And so we got reacquainted, and by that time, he was kinda sick of editorial conferences and big-city life and the soot that was being put out all over the city. And so he came back after that. But there was another time I—and that's

real hazy, and it may have preceded this one. But he—at one point, I remember telling him that I'd like him to take his old job back and that Pat had left—was not there and, course—and then, course, the final one was after my brother and I sold the *Commercial* in 1986, he stayed on at the *Commercial* for several years after that. Paul did. [*RR clears throat*] And then accepted the job at Little Rock as editorial page editor there. We—he was here for some time before June—we—and we continued to live in Pine Bluff until June convinced me that it'd be a good idea for us to move upriver for a while. And we came here. I told Paul, "Well, you left, so I had to come [*RR laughs*] up here, too."

[03:29:32] RR: So while you were there at the same—with Paul until [19]86, [*clears throat*] let's see, we had presidential elections. There was Nixon and Ford and Reagan and then—I'm wondering, Paul is a pretty firmly grounded Republican now. Was he always Republican in his party politics, or did that evolve over time?

EF: I think he was always sympathetic to Republican Party, but differed with them—with the party, and sometimes pretty strenuously on certain issues. I think, too, that sympathy for the Republican Party strengthened over time, and I think he's a good bit stronger in his rightist tendencies now than he was a

number of years ago.

[03:30:47] RR: Did the paper endorse Republicans or Democrats for president during that period I'm talkin' bout—from, say, 1970 on up until you sold the paper?

EF: You'll have to help me with the dates. The—when Reagan ran the first time . . .

RR: In [19]80.

EF: . . . there was a—there was another candidate who . . .

RR: Well, he beat Jimmy Carter in the general election. I'm fuzzy about the Republican primary, but . . .

EF: There was a . . .

RR: Wasn't George H. W. Bush.

EF: There was another candidate that almost nobody supported in the presidential race who got a small percentage of the vote.

RR: Oh, Ross Perot?

EF: No, no, this was before Ross Perot.

RR: Okay.

EF: I think it was—my recollection that it was Reagan's first—[*telephone rings*] Reagan's first election, and my—as I recall it, my feeling was—who—who'd he run against, Carter?

RR: Yes, he beat Carter. Yes.

[03:32:13] EF: I was—I—as I recall it, I was sick of Carter. I

thought he was intelligent, well meaning, industrious, and a miserable president. That was—and—and I couldn't see a "B" actor from Hollywood taking over. And June rather liked this third candidate, whose name is now escaping me.

RR: Me, too.

TM: It wasn't Mondale, was it?

RR: No, that was earlier.

TM: Really?

RR: Yeah.

EF: Um . . .

RR: Nixon disposed of him, I believe.

EF: Anyway, we . . .

RR: No, no, no. Mondale was—no, that was . . .

TM: Was that . . .

RR: . . . for Reagan's second term, though.

TM: Okay.

RR: Yeah, yeah, you're right. Yeah, but—yeah.

EF: I can't think of this guy's [*TM clears throat*] . . .

RR: In [19]80, I can't think of that third person.

[03:33:05] EF: But anyway, we—if that's the right race, and I think it is, the [*laughs*] *Pine Bluff Commercial* endorsed him [*laughter*] for pre . . .

RR: Okay. [*Laughs*]

EF: . . . for president.

RR: All right.

EF: Uh . . .

RR: And what about Nixon?

EF: And he ran against who?

RR: Well, Nixon was elected in [19]68, and he beat Hubert Humphrey.

EF: I think we supported Nixon.

RR: And then in [19]72, Nixon defeated . . .

EF: McGovern?

RR: . . . McGovern.

EF: I had trouble with McGovern's—some of McGovern's political views, and I also had trouble with his mathematics because I remembered that he said—not that he was a 100 percent behind "Tom" Eagleton but that he was a 120 percent [*RR laughs*] or something behind Eagleton prior to dumping him. I . . .

[03:34:10] RR: And then in [19]76, that was when Jimmy Carter was elected, and he defeated Gerald Ford.

EF: We were opposed to Ford, if memory serves at all. While we had supported Nixon and had basically supported the Vietnam War and continued to support Nixon until we became convinced in

the Watergate thing that he was lying, and then we turned wholly against Nixon in favor of his impeachment. When he was—when he resigned and Ford pardoned him, we were opposed to the pardon and thought that, despite the fact that he had vacated the office, that the impeachment should have continued, and that Paul was echoing it—well, he was part of it—totally a part of this thing.

[03:35:26] RR: And I assume Paul had a big voice in these decisions down through the years.

EF: Yes, and I might—I should say this, too—on any big—[*RR coughs*] although my brother did not take a day-by-day, active interest in the news and editorial part of the paper, his bailiwick was circulation, overseeing circulation department, and the production and, to some extent, advertising, though I participated there as well. But any time there was a major decision—a highly controversial matter editorially—I would always discuss it with him before we went forward. And likewise, when the need for new machinery or any major thing in his bailiwick, he would always discuss it with—that with me.

RR: Mh-hmm. And Armistead would've been—he would've been part of these decisions then—endorsements and that kinda thing. Is that what you're say . . .

EF: Mostly after the thing was under way. I mean, before publication.

RR: Right.

EF: But basically, the editorial page editor and I would get together, and we would decide—and probably write and edit the editorial.

RR: Yeah.

[03:36:55] EF: And then before publishing it, I'd get together with Armistead and tell him what I thought about it and what repercussions I thought there might be and . . .

RR: Yeah. Speaking of repercussions . . .

EF: I'm sorry?

[03:37:12] RR: Speaking of repercussions, in 1957 the editorial stand that the paper took was unpopular. What kind of reaction did you get from the town, from readers, from advertisers?

EF: We had a number of cancellation subscrip—cancelled subscription. We lost some advertising. I don't think that my—at all that the advertising losses were as serious as the *Gazette* suffered, but we did lose some. I was—I felt more isolated socially, and I think most of the—I—well, I think that probably rubbed off on Armistead and my brother and members of the staff—particularly, members of the staff whose home had been in the area and all. It—there were threats.

[03:38:31] RR: How seriously—how serious were the threats?

EF: It's hard to know. There's one in particular that I remember, and I guess the reason—I guess the reason I remember it is because unlike the others, the person who—it was a threatening telephone call. Unlike the other threatening telephone calls, this one—[*RR sniffs*] this man identified himself. And I knew of him. I didn't know him personally, and I knew he was a tough segregationist. And I remember—when—June was in the room when I was—when I had that conversation, and she—a—after it was over, I was still angry, and she said, "Well, is he?" And I said, pretty angrily, "Is he what?" And she said, "Is he coming over [*RR laughs*] because you invited him over." [*Laughter*] Now he had made an offer which I hoped to be able to turn down. He offered to "cut your lousy guts out." But . . .

RR: Ooh, boy!

EF: But [*laughs*] that was—as I say, that was different because he identified himself. He did not come over.

RR: Yeah. What about members of the staff—the paper? [*Clears throat*] Did they—how unpleasant were things for them? Or did they feel this—these repercussions? Pat Owens, for example, tells about having his notes snatched away from him in a phone booth one time during this—I think it was during that period. It

mighta been at the *Gazette*, but . . .

EF: I . . .

RR: . . . but did things like that happen to a . . .

EF: . . . I think I remember his telling me about that, and I believe that was at the *Gazette*—while he was at the *Gazette*.

RR: It prob—I think you're right. Yeah. Yeah.

[03:40:33] EF: One thing I remember, and it was the race for governor in which Finkbeiner participated. He hired the—I guess it was called Hestand Stadium, where they had rodeos and that sort of thing in Pine Bluff, and we had endorsed him, or we were—I think, by that time, we had—we certainly did endorse him, and we said favorable things about him, I guess, before the endorsement. And he had a pretty good crowd, and several of us from the paper were there. And it—when he was making his talk, [*laughs*] he started a—one of his statements by saying, "Why, right here in your own hometown newspaper, the *Pine Bluff Commercial*, said"—and then there was a widespread "Boo!" You know, you he—the poor man thought that . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . that we had more sway than we [*laughs*] had.

RR: Well, that musta given you a [*EF laughs*] funny feeling, though, to be booed in the stadium.

EF: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

[03:41:55] RR: Oh, boy. Well—tell me how Pat Owens came into your life, and who was Pat Owens—Patrick J. Owens from Montana?

EF: I wonder how many people there are in the world who would be able to give a complete answer to the question [*RR laughs*], "Who was Patrick J. Owens?"

RR: Yeah.

EF: But we both knew him, and he was an amazing man. I have said I think he was tainted with genius. When I lost Joe Stroud as editorial page editor to go help Joe Hardin in his campaign against Faubus, I was in need of a replacement. And I had—I was a regular reader of the *Arkansas Gazette*, and I was—I came to be an enormous admirer of the stand that the *Arkansas Gazette* took in the fall of [19]57 and beyond. I said with I think not too much exaggeration that, in those days, I felt there were two things between Arkansas and barbarism, and one was the Women's Emergency Committee, and the other one was the *Arkansas Gazette*. Well, at that time, I was a regular reader of the *Gazette*, and I had admired a political columnist—the work of a political columnist there, and his name was Roy Reed. And I had never met him, but I called and told him I was looking for

an editorial page editor—that I was—that I had lost one, and—was he interested in the job? [03:44:09] And as I recall it, he said, "Well"—he felt flattered to be considered, but was content with the job that he had. And he we chatted for a little bit—and, finally, Roy said, "But there's a fella up here you might wanna talk to." And I said, "Well, who is that?" He said, "Well, Patrick Owens." And he said, "He's a reporter, and he's—he writes a bunch of book reviews." And so that was how I came to get in touch with Pat. And I talked with—I called Pat later and asked him if he was interested, and he said he'd be glad to come down for an interview, and so he did. And we had a rather lengthy interview where I interviewed him, and he interviewed me. And when I was—well, I got interested in this guy, and I had already read his résumé, but I couldn't remember things about it. I flipped through, and I said, "What—Pat, where did you go to school?" And he said, "Kalispell High School in Montana." I said, "No, no, I mean, where—where'd you go to college?" And he said, "Well, I was only there for a short while, so I didn't bother puttin' it down." And I said, "Well, you're applying for a job as editorial page editor. You're in the writing business now. I—I'm a little bit puzzled." He said, "If you mean to ask me whether I feel competitively disadvantaged, my answer is no." [*Laughter*]

[03:45:49] And so Roy Reed was the person who first put me in touch with Pat Owens, and I feel like saying now, too, that that wasn't the end of Roy Reed's influence on the *Commercial* and what I was trying to do at the *Commercial*, because sometime later, I got an application from a young man from—recently out of college. Eric Black was his name, and he was—had been going to Oberlin, and he told me, among other things, that he knew Roy Reed. As a matter of fact, he was going with Roy Reed's daughter [*RR laughs*], and that he had talked with Roy and asked him for advice about where he should apply and that Roy said, "Well, I think you oughta apply either at the *Greenville Delta Democrat Times* in Mississippi or the *Pine Bluff Commercial*. And he plied—applied for the job at the *Commercial,* and we hired him. He did a good job. And that was the beginning of year after year, Oberlin graduates coming to seek employment at the *Pine Bluff Commercial*. And I don't think there was a ringer in the bunch, and some were exceptional reporters, and I—some of 'em that I thought were very good—I probably can't recall their names anymore, but Tom Hamburger, who went on to bigger and better things, was one of them. And a gal—a woman by the name of Carol Matlack was, I thought, a superlative reporter.

[03:47:43] RR: How many of those Oberlin kids came to the *Commercial* altogether?

EF: I don't know the answer to that. There—but there musta been at least a half dozen, maybe more.

RR: I think there mighta been seven or eight. I've [*EF laughs*] seen list here and there—enough that they began to refer to themselves as the "Oberlin Mafia." [*Laughter*]

EF: Right. That's right, and became—yeah.

RR: And a lot of 'em left the *Commercial* to go to the *Gazette* and spent some time there, and then went on—Tom Hamburger, for example, is now the—is it chief Washington correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times*?

EF: It—I don't know. It may be.

RR: I think that's his job. Carol Matlack lives in Paris. I don't know what she does now, but she—did—didn't she work for the *International Herald Tribune* in Paris . . .

EF: I'm not certain of that.

RR: . . . for a time?

EF: I know she worked there. She lived for a time, I think, in Russia.

RR: Ah—yeah, yeah.

EF: And . . .

[03:48:47] RR: How bout Paul Nielsen? Was he one of those?

EF: I don't think Paul—I don't associate him with Oberlin, but I'm not certain of it. But you mean . . .

RR: No, I think you're right. He was not Oberlin, but he did work at the *Commercial* . . .

EF: Yes.

RR: . . . [*clears voice twice*] didn't he?

EF: Yes.

RR: Yeah.

EF: Yes, he did.

RR: And then the *Gazette*, and he's now at the *New York Times*.

[03:49:05] EF: Huh. Pa—one year when I was—I went to ANPA—American Newspaper Publishers Association convention in New York at the Waldorf Astoria. That's where it used to be that that organization met only at—annually only at the Waldorf Astoria, and I went a time or two, and I got sick of New York and I stopped going to the thing. I probably had no business goin' to that anyway. But—and it started circulating around, and then it finally made its way back up to New York on rotation with San Francisco and other places. And I had calmed down a little bit, and I went back to New York and gave New York another try. And Pat Owens put together a little party—a little restaurant

party for June and me, and Paul Nielsen—I forget now who was present, but anybody up there who had a connection with the paper or maybe even beyond the paper, he put that together, and he gave me a little party about it.

RR: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, Owens by then was at *Newsday*, I guess . . .

EF: I guess so.

RR: . . . writing editorials and a column.

EF: Yeah.

RR: In fact, I guess *Newsday* was his last journalism work. Could that be right?

EF: I think so.

RR: And then he had a stroke. And I guess it ought to be said that he finally died a few years ago.

EF: I think that was 2002.

[03:50:39] RR: Yeah, it sounds about right. Yeah. [*Clears throat*] I wanted to ask you about some of the other—you've had some extraordinary young people come under your tutelage at the *Commercial*. One was Gene Foreman, who worked all over Arkansas at the *Gazette* and the *Commercial*. He was—wasn't he your managing editor for a while?

EF: He was, and I think after that he was executive editor. Pat had become executive editor and . . .

RR: Right.

EF: . . . I think that Gene took that title as well.

RR: Right. And then he spent some time at the *New York Times*, and there was a long, long strike, and he needed work and came back to the *Commercial*.

[03:51:29] EF: That's right, and I attribute his coming to the *Commercial* to Pat Owens. Pat said of him, "He—he's an awfully good man, and I'm—and he is a superlative technician." I remember, those were Pat's wor—"A superlative technician." Well, of course, he was—Pat—Gene Foreman was that, and . . .

RR: Certainly was.

EF: . . . and a good deal more than that as well. But it was on account of Pat's recommendation that I got in touch with Gene, or we got in touch with Gene, and he was—it was just as you said, he was on strike. He had done a tryout with the *Times*, I think, and had pleased them. And then—and was working for them, and then they went on strike, and he needed to support a family and . . .

[03:52:24] RR: Yeah. And he eventually—when he came to retire many years later, he had been the managing editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* for many, many years during a period when

they won at least one Pulitzer Prize a year and sometimes two, over a period of fifteen or twenty years. [*Airplane flies overhead*] One of the best newspapermen in America. How long did he work for you altogether?

EF: [*Sighs*] I'm not sure of that. It must—it musta been at least two or three years, I think. I—I'm not certain of that. I—I've said about Gene Foreman that I think he was the only man on the staff who felt worse about a misspelling or a typographical error than I did.

RR: [*Laughs*] Yeah.

EF: I was just—it just—it hurt him . . .

RR: Oh.

EF: . . . it hurt him deeply to . . .

RR: Bob Douglas once said about him—Bob was the managing editor at the *Gazette* and a—and an old copy editor. And he told me one time that of all the dozens—scores—maybe hundreds of reporters he had edited down through the years, Gene Foreman was the only one whose copy could not be cut. [*EF laughs*] He wrote so tight. If you took out a word, the whole story would collapse. [*Laughter*] High praise from an old reporter. Yeah.

EF: I think he's gonna be back in town.

RR: Oh, I'd like to see him.

[03:54:00] EF: I—reason I say that, John Thompson, who was a city editor and later a—I think he—I better leave it that—city editor—called me a while back and said he was tryin' to get a together a group of *Pine Bluff Commercial* alumni, and he said that he wanted to pick a time when Foreman might be able to come down. And I think we're shooting at something like October. Sometime in October. And I ho—I hope he does. I . . .

RR: Yeah. And John was one of your people—John Thompson?

EF: Yes.

RR: City editor?

EF: Yes, and I'm tryin' to think if he went on to be managing editor, too. I'm drawing a blank about that.

RR: Now what was Tom Parsons for . . .

EF: He . . .

RR: . . . for you?

EF: . . . he finally was a managing editor.

RR: Yeah.

EF: And it was—and later on, I understand he went to work for the *Associated Press* and . . .

RR: And I think he's still there, isn't he—at the a . . .

EF: Oh, I haven't been in touch with him lately.

[03:55:11] RR: I think he is, yeah, and has been in some of the big

bureaus around. Frank Lightfoot. Did he work you?

EF: Yes. He was a—he was sports editor for quite some time, and I think he took another job later on.

RR: Mh-hmm. Ol' Frank died not long ago. Yeah.

EF: Right. Nice person.

RR: Yeah. Yeah. I think it was my son who, incidentally, worked for you for about a year as a reporter after he consented to come home from Europe after wandering around over there like a gypsy for a while. And I—and he told me that he had once heard Frank Lightfoot refer to the *Pine Bluff Co*—he said, "This is the *Pine Bluff Commercial* and graduate school." [*Laughter*] And apparently, a lot of young reporters sorta looked on it as a vital part of their education. Did you all understand that—you and the management? Did . . .

EF: I think we came to understand that, yeah, that we were getting talented—a lot of talented, young people who planned to go on with bigger and better things. And—yeah, and they did a good service for us.

RR: Yeah.

EF: Almost without exception, this—they did. They were—didn't do . . .

[03:56:41] RR: Yeah. There was somebody—oh, Lancaster. What

did Bob Lancaster do for the *Commercial*? Was he a reporter?

EF: Yes, he was a reporter. He—I remember he was—he—when he came, he was young enough to think that anybody over thirty was on the downhill slope. [*RR laughs*] He—[*laughs*] that view I think has modified some in recent years.

RR: Yeah.

EF: Bob was a reporter and—at a time when I was without an editorial page editor and without a prospect to bring in as editorial page editor, and I needed one badly, I asked Bob if he would do that. And I don't think he wanted the job at all, but he—I think he—just out of loyalty, that he said all right, he would try to do that. I don't think he enjoyed it very much, but he did a yeoman's job, in any case.

RR: Yeah, I'll be he did.

EF: [*Laughs*] And he—'cause later on, he went to the—I guess, to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. I think . . .

RR: He did.

EF: I think Gene tapped him. And by the way, he had—he won a—Nieman.

RR: Yes.

EF: And he told me the other—I see him once in a while. I think he told me the other day that he had a copy of the recommendation

letter that I wrote for him. I can't remember what I said, but I—but apparently, I didn't jinx his chance, anyway.

RR: Yeah. Probably somethin' about his writing ability. He was a terrific writer—has been—or at least, in my opinion, he's a good writer. He knows how to turn a phrase, and he can be funny when it's called for.

[03:58:47] EF: Yes, in—yes, indeed. He's the only person that I know of who has read fifteen hundred pages of Xenophon.

RR: Of . . .

EF: I do not believe . . .

RR: . . . of what?

EF: Xenophon. I do not believe he read it in the original ancient [*RR laughs*] Greek. [*Laughter*] Can you imagine fifteen hundred pages of . . .

RR: Oh no. [*Laughs*]

EF: . . . Xenophon?

RR: No, no, I can't—[*EF laughs*] yeah, he—and still lives in Sheridan.

EF: Right. He comes up—we have lunch together from time to time—talk about books and everything.

[03:59:18] RR: Yeah, yeah. The—Greenberg won the Pulitzer in [*clears throat*] [19]69, and [*paper shuffles*] you were telling me that the paper came close to winning another one three years

later, and the committee decided that—what is that story about how the paper almost won a second Pulitzer?

EF: No, I'm—I must not have been clear. That was something I read that—and it was said in 1970, and Pat was no longer—it was Pat Owens that I read—he was no longer working for the *Commercial* at . . .

RR: Right.

EF: . . . that time. But I had heard that he was at the selection of the Professional Newspaperman for the Pulitzer for commentary—I guess for co—yeah, for commentary. And—but—for—he worked at *Newsday* at the time, and according to this account, *Newsday* had won two other Pulitzers that year—had been—and they thought that three would be too many, and they—so they didn't do that.

RR: That's a shame.

EF: But I—my interest in that on—my special interest in that was that here are two guys that I spent a lotta time with editing and associating with, and if that story is true, both of 'em were . . .

[04:00:55] RR: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I hope the answer to this next question is "No," but I feel like I need to ask it. Your great-grandfather, Charles Gordon Newman, fought two duels. Were they—first of all, did they have anything to do with his work at

the paper? Was that what prompted the duels?

EF: I don't mind getting that question at all, but I'm—I—I'm sorry that I know very little about it. It's only family stories, and I do know that my brother and I, years ago, found a—I guess you'd call 'em a brace of dueling pistols in a case that later got away from us. We don't know what ever happened to them. And it was just a family story that he had fought in two duels.

RR: Yeah.

EF: My impression was that it probably did have to do with the paper and that I didn't—did not hear that anybody was killed or wounded. I don't know how they came out. I can't even be certain that they occurred, but that was the family's account.

RR: Well, here's my question. Have you ever had to fight a duel?

EF: [*Laughs*] No.

[04:02:31] RR: I would hope not, but [*EF laughs*] you've certainly been threatened. In fact, the—this fellow who offered to come out to the house and cut your insides out—anybody else ever get that far along with their threats?

EF: Not who identified themselves. I had a number of threats of violence or . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: But as I say, that was the only one I really took seriously.

RR: Yeah, yeah.

EF: I notified the police that I'd had such a threat.

RR: Yeah.

EF: And told 'em that if that occurred—if I had a problem, that they might check with this individual.

RR: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That might've occurred to the man after [*EF laughs*] he hung up the phone. [*Laughter*] "Maybe I shouldn't have been so fast to tell him who I was."

TM: Excuse me, Roy. I need to change tapes.

RR: Yeah.

[Tape stopped]

[04:03:32] RR: Okay. You and your brother sold the paper in 1986 to Donrey Media. Can you tell me how that came about—why you sold the paper?

EF: My brother had been interested in selling the paper for several years, and I had resisted it, and—not that we had knock-down and drag-outs about it, but I didn't wanna sell the paper. He had a son working in the advertising department in those late days, and all of my children had had some [*RR coughs*] opportunity by then to have worked at the paper—at least summertime and that sort of thing. The one exception was one that—the youngest, who was still in college. I think he did a

little bit at the paper on—in the summertime. But all the others had had a bit more experience at the paper, and they didn't seem to be interested in that as a career. I guess it was perhaps too early to tell about the one who was in college. But in retrospect, I don't think that woulda been an appropriate career for him. One wanted to go into medicine and did, and my daughter was interested in art and folk art and other things. And my next child, David, was a writer or had done a lot of writing in his career, and there was a time when I asked him if he thought he would like to work at the *Commercial* on a regular basis, and I—but I told him I would not be—I would not have full control over his work there—that I was—I—my brother was also a stock—an equal stockholder with me, and I wanted—I didn't want him to come there and—under false impressions. And he thought it over, and he decided that [*hissing sound in background*] he would not do that. And so it was after I was pretty much convinced that the family was not gonna be interested. And also, I must say because I was continually looking for good people and continually losing key people—not just in the news and editorial side but also in the others—in advertising and production—continually—that got very wearisome. And I was tired of having to go do that and . . .

RR: Yeah.

[04:06:58] EF: And so finally I said, "Okay, we'll see what we can do." And then the—there was always a sense in which I didn't feel the *Commercial* was mine. I—there was always sense in which I felt I belonged to the *Commercial* as much as the other way around, and it was hard to contemplate that for a long time. But—and we—one was—one of the things—I just couldn't see putting out the word publically that we wanted to sell the paper, and as a—in consequence, we did what we could do very quietly and confidentially. That may've been a big mistake. I don't know. But in terms of what happened to the quality of the paper, I have to believe that we might well have done better.

RR: How well has the paper done under the new—the—Donrey?

[04:08:10] EF: I don't—I rarely see the paper now. I—course, I—for the years that I—after [19]86—between [19]86, when we sold the paper, and [19]95, when we moved here to Little Rock, I got the paper every day, and I found my [*laughs*]—I found for some months that I was marking the paper [*RR laughs*] and then it finally began to—it began to occur to me that I only did that for me. I wasn't even showing to anybody [*laughs*] . . .

RR: Yeah, yeah.

EF: . . . anybody else. And then after we moved here, I subscribed

by mail for some time, but got so sick of co—four issues coming in at one time and then—and that sorta thing that I . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . I gave up on it. I don't know how they've done. They're—I have—I know the—Mike Hengel a little bit. He came there—he's the publisher now. He came there earlier—I guess, in the news side. Maybe he was managing editor. I'm not—but after we sold it, I met him at that time—didn't get—I don't know him well even now, but he seemed like a very—he seemed like a serious newsman and seemed like a very decent person, but I suppose that there are constraints under which he had been operating on that would be very difficult to . . .

RR: Especially now, I guess, with the economics being what—one of the things that I came across in some background material was terrific pessimism about the future of [*clears throat*] the newspaper industry about two generations back—not just not just talkin' about the *Commercial* but newspapers in general. Some member of your family—I can't—sorry, I can't remember which Freeman it was, who was afraid that newspapers didn't have all that bright a future. And now we're in a similar situation, when papers are actually closing and laying off people and—how should we read the situation now? Is it a time to be

pessimistic, or do we need to remember that the earlier ancestor didn't exactly get it right. You know, there were some golden years after this—whatever the economy was doing back then that caused him to be pessimistic. Should we be pessimistic now, or are things gonna work out?

[04:10:56] EF: Of course, it's impossible to know. I—people who are working truncated hours and taking unwanted furloughs and who are seeking other jobs, who have been working for newspapers—I suppose they—it—I—it would take a lot for them to be optimistic about the future. I worry about it. I—it's—it—I am particularly concerned about investigative reporting and the long-term benefits of invest—good investigative reporting that doesn't show up quickly. And it co—and in some cases, costs a lotta time and a lotta money. And without—that function for the—I think for the country to thrive, that function has to—I think, has to be taken up somehow; either by a news—remaining newspapers or electronically, it has to be done. We need—I think the republic needs that—needs it badly.

[04:12:22] RR: Yeah. I agree with that. Yeah. And all that quite aside from technology and whether we'll have paper to read or will we have to read it on a Kindle machine or some other device. I've got a few more questions. If we've got a little

more . . .

TM: [*Clears throat*] I—could I interject . . .

RR: Yeah.

TM: . . . a question here?

RR: Hmm.

TM: Do you think—and this may just be somethin' to think about, but would there be anything that was kinda thrown away from years gone back in the paper business?

EF: I'm sorry.

TM: Any processes that might've been big, you know, fifty or a hundred years ago that the newspaper business has kinda passed on that might be brought back to help now? Or is there anything that papers aren't doin' now that they might've been doin' at another time that could maybe help 'em out? It's kind of a funny question, but is that . . .

[04:13:32] RR: Like the ol' Mergenthaler machines that got passed over, and then Linotypes came—I don't know. Maybe . . .

TM: Yeah, I'm just kinda thinkin' of any . . .

RR: Yeah, have there been ideas that didn't—that got short shrift in the past that ought to be reopened and looked at again—newspaper ideas—production or otherwise? Let me toss out a particular example, and I'm not sure this is what Trey had in

mind. But you remember the newspaper, *PM*, back in about 1940. It didn't last but a few years. But *PM* was remarkable for a particular thing. It did not pretend to report the news objectively, whereas all the rest of the mainstream papers—at least the idea was objective reporting. *PM* said, "No, we're gonna—more like the British press." We've seen a rise of various kinds of media that take a point of view, rather than—is that a legitimate thing to be thinking about to save journalism? Or is that so far out of our way of thinking, journalistically, that it would never work? Didn't work for *PM*, but then they had other problems, too.

EF: I don't have a solid conviction about that. Of course, we have something like that. [*RR coughs*] Not in—not that I'm aware of in newspapers, but in magazines. I subscribe to the *New Criterion*, which is a—it's conservative, politically, and sometimes quite conservative and has some excellent writing in it. I subscribe also to the *New York Review of Books*, which is almost always—to—leftist, and—so we're—and I'm sure there must be other examples of that sort of political viewpoint being paramount that I haven't thought of or don't—I'm not aware of. But I—I'm—with regard to some version of newspapers, I—I'm not sure.

[04:16:17] RR: Well, take the European papers, which don't make much pre—t—tense of being down the middle. They just generally align with the left or the right politically and go from there. You take, like, the *Guardian* in Great Britain as opposed to the *Telegraph*—you know, the left versus right. And, of course, they have a long tradition of that kinda thing. Would America be receptive to that kind of journalism in its newspapers?

EF: I'll give you a firm maybe. But . . .

RR: Okay.

[04:17:01] EF: . . . but I also wonder if that would be good for the country. I can't help wondering. I tend to think there's no excessive civility among political adherents of different political viewpoints. The polarization is—some polarization is inevitable. It goes along with the right to vote, of course. But intense polarization, where it becomes just automatic to disagree with somebody because he di—he disagrees with you on some important matter . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . I—I'm far from sure that that's good for the country.

RR: Yeah. I know as a newspaperman, I was—I never could get comfortable with the newspapers in London [*paper shuffles*]

because of this. You know, I—and I kept searching for a—well, a—an *Arkansas Gazette* or a *Pine Bluff Commercial* or a *New York Times*, and there's no such thing.

EF: Hmm.

RR: Yeah.

EF: I remember we—at the *Commercial* during my time, we strove for objectivity. And one of the locutions that were—as far as I was concerned, were verboten in news columns unless it was quoted from somebody else, was the locution "pointed out." It seemed to me [*RR laughs*] that "the pointed out"—the underlying notion is "and that's the truth."

RR: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

EF: And I didn't want any of my reporters deciding that somebody was pointing out something.

[04:18:55] RR: [*Laughs*] Absolutely. Yeah. [*Laughter*] And you know, I hate to say it, but I see more and more of that kind of small incursion in our day-to-day reporting, even in the wire services—you know, the *Associated Press*. And I—it bothers me to see it. Let—let's shift away from the newspaper business for a few minutes. I was astonished to learn that you are a mountain climber, and not just any mountain climber, but you've climbed some of the great mountains—and you and June, I

gather, together. Mount Whitney twice; Kilimanjaro, Mount Fuji, and which one were you seventy-nine years old at the time you . . .

EF: Fu—Mount Fuji.

RR: Fuji? Yeah. And what was the ceremony that you described to somebody a while ago that takes places once you reach the peak?

EF: Yes, there's a structure up there, and they sell a few souvenirs. And they also—anybody who reaches the summit who is seventy years of age or older is invited to sign in a book, and then they place a shallow—a very shallow ceramic cup in front of you, and they pour in a few—a little bit of sake, and you're supposed to then drink the sake and throw the cup into the crater. And June—I was seventy-nine, and June was seventy-seven at the time, and that was a two-day hike up. We spent the night on the—in a hut on the—partway up the mountain. And—but it was so foggy up there that I never saw the crater. And besides that, I decided to keep—we both decided to [*airplane flies overhead*] keep those little cups as souvenirs, and we have 'em over there.

RR: Oh, yeah. [*Laughter*]

[04:21:10] EF: Yeah, Mount Whitney—highest mountain in the contiguous forty-eight states. It's in California in the High

Sierras, and it's just shy of fourteen thousand five hundred feet. It was first climbed in our family by my son, Andy, and then he urged us to do it. And I climbed with—I climbed it the first time with him and his brother, David, and then the family went on all but—no, Eric went, too—there, too. The family went on another occasion there, but we did not reach the summit. We got to twelve thousand five hundred feet—camped there for the night. I looked over the slopes. The trail was wiped out by snow, but this was August, but there'd been an unusually heavy snowfall the winter before, and we would—there were no trails, and I knew that—we had no crampons, and I knew that if we did that, that somebody would get in trouble, and I . . .

RR: Oh yeah, yeah.

EF: And I—they were adults, and I said, "I'm not gonna tell you what to do, but I think it's dangerous, and I'm gonna turn back." And they all—I'm glad they . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . they turned back, too.

[04:22:23] RR: Now is mountain climbing something you took up after you retired—after you—well, sold the paper?

EF: Not exactly. When I was sixteen, a year before I graduated from high school, [*paper shuffles*] a friend and I hitchhiked out to the

Grand Canyon. And we—from the South Rim, we went down to the river and the back out by a different trail. That's not exactly mountain climb [*RR laughs*], but it's like mountain climbing in reverse. [*Laughter*]

RR: Yes.

EF: And having told that story to my kids as they were [*RR clears throat*] coming along, Andy and a cousin—I guess he was outta high school. I don't—he—maybe he was in college. He drove—he and his cousin drove out, traversed the canyon from South Rim to North Rim, and then hitchhiked about a hundred and some odd hour—miles back to get to their car. [*Laughter*] And then they continued on out to Mount Whitney to Death Valley and the bristlecone pines and the—and Mount Whitney, and they climbed Mount Whitney. And so I gue—he was interested in the canyon, but partly because of what I had said, and then he interested [*RR sniffs*] me in the mountain climbing by what he told me about that. And then . . .

RR: I . . .

[04:23:49] EF: . . . one thing led to another. And I—when I got to be sixty, I said, "If I wanna climb a high mountain, I better get started." And so what high mountain? So—well, Kilimanjaro is the highest mountain in Africa. It's nineteen thousand three

hundred and forty feet. And it's very near the equator, so that means it's not nearly so dangerous as those that are farther north or farther south. So I said, "Okay, that's gonna be it." And three of my four—June didn't go, but three of my four kids did, and my friend, Robert Johnston, who's originally from Pine Bluff. You may know him. He was a . . .

RR: I don't believe so.

EF: He was a Clinton appointee as public service . . .

RR: Oh, right. Yes.

EF: Chairman of Public Service Commission. He was a legislator—later for a time and a political science prof at UALR for a time, too.

RR: Yeah.

EF: Anyway, we made up—most of the—my group made up most of the party that went up, and we climbed that together. That was a—for us, that was a five-day, up-and-down hike. I guess some—something—I don't know, around fifty miles, I guess, altogether.

RR: Oh boy.

EF: No technical climbing but just a . . .

RR: Yeah.

[04:25:17] EF: I learned just recently on the web—I guess I learned

it—it says re—on the web recently that people don't know much about it, but an average—an ave—in an average year—it was average, ten people a year die on Kilimanjaro.

RR: Oh, on that one mountain? Oh, my! I thought you were gonna say on Everest, but . . .

EF: No, it must—I . . .

RR: But [*paper shuffles*] . . .

EF: I think something like—I think I've read something like 10 percent of the people die on Everest.

RR: Yeah, incredible.

EF: I think something like that. But Kilimanjaro is—the problem there is just the high alti—just the altitude, and we—supplemental oxygen is not necessary. But some people come to—at lower elevations than that come down with . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . cerebral edema or . . .

[04:26:20] RR: Yeah, it—it's not to be laughed at. I had it in Tibet, just an ordinary—you know, out in Lhasa, I got altitude sickness, and it's real. Did you take oxygen pillows or anything like that up Kilimanjaro?

EF: Oxygen?

RR: Yeah.

EF: No. No, we didn't. We took—I took a drug called—I think it's called Diamox, and I it's supposed to be a—an aid. You take it before you—for some time before you start up and then continue it during the—during that. That was three huts; and then the fourth day, you go to the summit and then down to the middle hut; and then the fifth day, you walk out to the base.

RR: Yeah.

EF: It . . .

RR: Yeah. What an experience, though.

EF: But June did climb Fuji.

RR: Yeah. Yeah.

[04:27:25] EF: I—that was kind of a funny thing. I—in 2003, I had a hip replacement, and I told going in that I hoped after the surgery to continue to be quite active. I—that was my hope. And as a matter of fact, I wanted to climb Mount Fuji. So the only—the surgeon understood that. On the day of the surgery, I was being prepped for surgery, and the chief resident came in and said, "Well, we've had our committee meeting, and we've decided that you will have a metal rod and—against a plastic cup in your hip." And I said, "Oh, is that right?" He said, "Yes, that's what we think would be best." And I said, "Well, you know, I have hopes of climbing Mount Fuji." He said, "What?"

And I said, "I"—and he said, "Well, just a minute." And so left, and then he and the surgeon came in. That was Carl Nelson who was at UAMS . . .

RR: Okay.

EF: . . . and he was grand ol' man of orthopedic surgery—unfortunately, died not too long after my surgery. He came back in with—two of 'em came in, and he said, "Do I understand you that you're thinking about climbing Mount Fuji," and I said, "Yes. Yes, I am." I said, "I haven't made any definite plans and I don't have a ticket or anything, but I'd"—he said, "Well, in that case, I think we better make it metal to metal, and instead of using a twenty-nine millimeter ball, a thirty-nine millimeter ball because that'll give you somewhat more a range of motion." So at the last minute [*laughter*] . . .

RR: You—so you got a custom-made hip. Made for mountain climbers. Oh, extraordinary. Did it give you any trouble on the climb?

EF: No, my—the climb was hard for me at that age, but the hip didn't.

RR: Still doin' okay?

EF: Still doing okay.

[04:29:40] RR: Yeah, yeah. Good. [*Laughs*] Oh. You have a

collection of Pre-Columbian art. Tell me about that some. How much and where did you get it—where's it all come from, and where is it now?

EF: [*Sighs*] I was in Colombia. I had been there to Cali, Colombia—this woulda been December [19]78 and January [19]79 for—I had gone down there with a bullfight fan club that I had belonged to for some years and had never made a trip with them. And they—well, anyway, I—I'd been down there to see the bullfights in college during their fair 'cause they had se—several days—serial bullfights over several days. And we were on our way back. We stopped off at Cartagena, and I was walkin' down the street and saw an interesting-looking window display and went in and spent some time looking around. I didn't know anything about Pre-Columbian artifacts, and I—interested in looking at these things. [04:31:06] Then there was one in particular that I kept coming back to, and I—the young fellow who was running the shop said, "I—you seem to be interested in that one." I said, "Yeah, it looks very interesting to me." And he said, "Well, I can make a special deal for you on that." And I said, "Well, now I don't know anything about these things. I don't know anything about Colombian law about removing 'em. I don't know anything about US law." And he

said, "Well, I will guarantee you that if you buy this, I will—you will have no trouble with the Colombian authorities. When you reach the States, you will have no trouble with the customs off—offic—people there. And I will guar"—and I said, "I'm flying, and I don't know whether it'll get there intact." He said, "I will guarantee you to back it, so that when you open it in your living room, it will be just as it is now." And so I thought about that for a while, and I said, "Okay." [04:32:16] And then I made a perfectly idle threat. I said, "And I wanna tell you I'm gonna postdate the check by two weeks, and I guarantee you if I have any trouble with the Colombian or US authorities or if there's a crack in it that's not there now, I will stop payment on the check." I don't think banks pay any attention to that, so it was a—I think it was a perfectly idle threat. He said, "Okay." And I didn't have any—he put it in a wooden box surrounded by sawdust and filled with sawdust and screwed—the top of the box screwed on. And they paid no attention in Colombia. He told me it was legal. I believed him. When I got to wherever I can't remember whether it was New Orleans or Miami. Anyway, they said, "What's in the box?" And I said, "It's ceramics." And they said, "Show me." And I had a Boy Scout-type knife, and you could still—in those days, you could still carry a pocketknife.

[*Laughter*] And unscrewed—I unscrewed the top of it and opened the thing up. He brushed the sawdust aside until he could see the rim of the pot. It coulda been—I guess it coulda been filled—underneath that it coulda been filled with cocaine or [*laughter*] whatnot, but that was enough for him. Said, "Okay," and so I put it back together again and it made it all the way home, and I still have it. It's upstairs here. If you're curious, I'll show it to you. [*Laughter*]

[04:33:50] RR: So did you end up gettin' a larger collection over the years?

EF: I began to collect then, and I've never, except as a kid finding a few arrowheads at one place or another, I—I've never gone out and dug for this myself. I bought from other collectors and from dealers and it—there are shows that—where dealers will get together and I—so that's how I've acquired 'em over time.

RR: Yeah.

EF: Mexico—some of—many from Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Peru.

RR: I gather some of the things I'm looking at on that chest over there are items that you brought back from Latin America.

EF: On this chest over here? [Points to chest behind couch]

RR: Yes.

EF: This—some of 'em are—well, I see one there that is from the Caribbean. The—they call those Taino. I think they're the same as the Arawak. It's a—Arawak Indians. I think the Arawak were on the first island that Columbia—Columbus visited. The big black pots happen to be Chinese. Those—the—they're . . .

RR: Okay. Yeah.

EF: They're June's. And this pot on the right is from Fox, Arkansas.

RR: Really?

EF: Joe Bruhin has a Japanese-style kiln there . . .

RR: Oh.

EF: . . . and he's a great potter.

RR: Oh, that's beautiful, too. What about these up here?

EF: Oh, I didn't mention that I also have some local ones—Quapaw and Caddo.

RR: Oh.

EF: And the ones on the far—well, all the three large ones are Quapaw. And this—the one that—the whitish-looking on there is Olmec, which—quite old. Olmec was the—kind of the mother civilization of Mesoamerica. The Olmec to the Mayans were about like the ancient Greeks and Romans to us.

RR: Oh. Hmm. Yeah, that does go back then. Yeah.

EF: And . . .

[04:36:38] RR: Hmm. What's this about bullfighting? When did you become a bullfight fan?

EF: [*Laughs*] That took place over a long period of time. My father had been part of a group of newspaper people who were, as I understand it, were invited to come down to Mexico [*clears throat*] by the president, who was at the time a man by the name of Calles—*C-A-L-L-E-S*. I think he was essentially a Communist. I think he was a red. And I guess his object was good PR for the country. Anyway, my father went down there, and I was two years old. That was 1928. And he was kind of enthralled with Mexico, so when—years later, he made a—made some trips down with the family, and I went down, and I saw my first bullfight 'cause that's what . . .

RR: When you were a child.

[04:37:39] EF: When I was a youngster. Yeah. And, of course, that's what tourists—one of the things that tourists did . . .

RR: Yeah, yeah.

EF: . . . when they went to Mexico. And Dad had seen the first time—when he went down for the first time, and so that—that's how—that's the first thing. And then there was a long period of time when I didn't see any bullfights and didn't have any particular interest. And—oh yeah, and then June—on our

wedding trip, June and I went to Mexico—drove down to Mexico in 1950. No air-condition in the car. It was hot, and one of the things we did was go to a bullfight. And that kinda resurrected my interest a little bit, and one thing led to another, and I finally got to Europe and went to see some bullfights in Spain, and then I learned in Seville that there was such a thing as a bullfight fan club in this country. I didn't know that before. As a matter of fact, there are several—a number of them. And I learned this while I was there, and so I joined the Club Taurino de Chicago [*RR laughs*], and I also joined another one with the improbable name of Taurine Bibliophiles of America. [*RR laughs*] And one time I had a T-shirt made with [*laughs*] the Taurine Bibliophiles . . .

RR: [*Unclear words*]

EF: [*Laughs*] People who collect bullfight . . .

RR: TBA.

EF: . . . books. [*Laughter*]

RR: Yeah.

EF: And . . .

[04:39:28] RR: What's the difference between bullfighting in Europe and the Americas?

EF: There are different ways of fooling with bulls, and of course, that

dates back to at least the—the Minoans civilization. They did some bull-vaulting and some of those—and there's some frescos and some whatever you call those tile works that show men or, in some cases, women dealing with bulls. The so-called Spanish-style bullfighting has a certain form, and that's generally used in Spain, in the parts of south of France, and in Latin America, where they—Mexico and Latin America, where they do it—they—essentially the same. But there are other ways of dealing with bulls where the bull is—with the Spanish way, the bull is almost invariably killed. I have nev—I understand that there are rare exceptions. I have not—I've seen many bullfights, and I've never seen that exception. There's a way of fighting bulls where you—the bull is not harmed and the object, I think—I've never seen it done, but I've read about it—to—a cockade is placed in between—on the—the bull's head between the horns, and the object is to remove that cockade, and the bull is not harmed. And then, of course, there's the bullfight from horseback ra—they—that's rejon, and there the—I think sometimes—I have seen that. They do kill—the ones that I have seen, they do kill the bull. [04:41:26] There may be a Portuguese style where they do not kill the bull. [*Paper shuffles*] I'm not sure about that. I've never seen that. And there—

there're some other ways, too. There's one—in the south of France, I saw—they have a—actually, it's not a bull. It's a brave cow, a female fighting animal. And it's loosely tethered. It's—they have a rope that they can control within [*RR clears throat*] reason. And then a man stands at some distance from the animal and cites it until it charges, and then, at the last moment, he may leap into the air and get over the animal or, at the last moment, shift position to the side, and that animal is not harmed either. And then it's retrieved by a rope after it's been given the slack to make the charge. And that's wonderful to see for a half hour. I mean, it's just spectacular. [*RR laughs*] But after that, it begins to be boring as can be.

[04:42:38] RR: When did you see the last one? Where and when?

EF: A place called Aguascalientes in Mexico, and it was a few weeks ago.

RR: Oh.

EF: There was a particular bullfighter that I had never seen, and I was interested in it, and my daughter, who is—does not like bullfighting, but it—has a great—is very good with Spanish and has a great deal of interest in Hispanic culture and art, learned that I was interested in this bullfighter, and she said, "Well, if you decide to go, I'll go with you." And we—when we reached

Mexico City, we began to see people around the airport wearing masks, and that's when we learned that the swine flu thing was just starting.

RR: Oh yeah, yeah.

EF: We went directly there to Aguascalientes from there, and we got some masks ourselves, too. We saw the bullfight and went—made one more stop, and on her iPhone, she kept getting texts from her husband, and I think my son was also texting her, saying, "That may be dangerous down there. Why don't you all get outta there as soon as you can?"

RR: Oh.

EF: So we . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . we cut the—we cut this trip short by a couple of days, but . . .

RR: Yeah, yeah. Does June share the interest in bullfighting or has she been to many of 'em with you? Does she . . .

EF: She's been to . . .

RR: Does she like the sport?

[04:44:22] EF: She's been to a number with me, and I think she went mostly out of a sense of duty. I—if you ask her now if she likes the bullfight, I think she would say, "Well, there're certain

aspects—the colorful thing; the ballet-like—some of the ballet-like movements are interesting to see. The cape work is nice." But it—beyond that, I think she'd say, "No, I don't" . . .

RR: Yeah. Maybe I'll ask her the question tomorrow. [*Laughter*] Could we take a short break, Trey?

TM: Yes, we can. You bet.

[Tape stopped]

[04:44:57] RR: Ed, what makes a man your age climb mountains? I mean, you were seventy-nine, I guess, the last time you did it. What on earth got into you that made you wanna [*laughs*] go climb a mountain?

EF: Well, one answer to that is when my—I had thought a little bit about maybe going to Mount Fuji. June was not planning to go at all. I had thought about it before I had my surgery, but then—let's see, when would it have been? In 2004, my oldest son, Andy, would've been fifty years old, and he'd been—and I thought that called for some kind of—something special. And he had been a—he'd been doing woodworking as a hobby, and so I called him. He lived in Dallas. And I said, "You know, this is a big birthday. I'd like to do something special. Is—do you need some kind of equipment for your shop or is there some kind of a trip that you've been wanting to make and the—and—or what

can I do that would—you'd—you like?" He said, "Well, let me think about it." And this was a little over a year since my hip surgery, and I must say, my ardor for climbing Fuji had begun to wane. And then Andy called back in a few days, and he said, "Dad, I've been thinkin' about it." And he said, "What I'd like to do is go with you when you climb Fuji." And I says, "Okay." [*Laughter*] And then [*RR clears throat*] his son was going. He was a—he also became a—an Eagle Scout, and my son says—he was—he—my son was not a scout or not to amount to anything. And he—and his son had wanted to do that early on, too, because of me. And he was Eagle Scout at fourteen as well. But anyway, he was going. Andy's other child, a daughter a little bit younger, was not planning to go, but began to think about it. And then she got in touch with June. Her—she's Abigail. And she got in touch with June and said, "June, what do you think about going with us to climb Mount Fuji?" She said, "I kinda hate to be the only female on the trip. And besides that, I don't think the guys want to do any shopping." [*RR laughs*] And so for the first time, June began to think about a chance to do something like that with the grandchildren, and so she signed on for it, too, and we all went to the summit. [*Laughs*]

RR: Yeah, yeah.

EF: And the young people—they set the trail. They chose the trail, and they—and I set the pace. [*Laughs*]

[04:48:07] RR: Oh. Oh. [*EF laughs*] Well, now when what's-his-name climbed Everest, and somebody asked him why he did it, and he said, "It's—because it's there." Is that what motivates mountaineers, [*clears throat*] generally speaking, or was there somethin' else in your case that made you wanna climb mountains?

EF: Well, it was the sense of challenge, I guess. When Andy encouraged me to climb Mount Whitney, I had—hadn't really thought anything about climbing mountains, and he did it, and he enjoyed the experienced, and he said, "Come, let's do that." And I didn't know if I could do it or not. I trained for it and did it. It was hard. Even at that age, it was hard.

[04:49:03] RR: Trained? Trained how?

EF: Well, running and carrying a pack—that sort of thing.

RR: Building up the stamina.

EF: Uh-huh.

RR: Yeah.

EF: And he was on a tight schedule and I—[*laughs*] we went up to twelve thousand, five hundred feet, and the next day, and we made camp—spent the night; left our—just took a day pack up

to the summit and then back; spent—I had thought we were gonna spend the night, and he said he didn't have time to do that. So on the summit day, we went to the summit and all the way back down. And I—that was a bit much for me, and I remember when we got back down to the lot where the—where we could get a bus back to civilization, I remember sitting down on one of those posts bout like this. [Leans forward, resting elbows on knees] And he said, "See there, you can do—you could do it," and I said, "Yeah, but I couldn't enjoy it." [*Laughter*] Then I got to thinking, "Well, that's the highest mountain in the contiguous forty-eigh—that's a little bit of accomplishment. Hmm." And so then I said, "Well, maybe I might wanna do that again sometime," and I did. So—and then I—[*RR sniffs*] one of my regrets is I never made—I never climbed a mountain that went to twenty thousand feet; and another one is that I did some jogging for some years, and I never ran a marathon. Those are two things that I have regretted.

[04:50:53] RR: Yeah. "Regrets, I have a few, but too few to mention." Remember that from Sinatra—"My Way."

EF: Oh [*laughs*] . . .

RR: "I did it my way." So you don't have many regrets from your life

up to now?

EF: Oh, they're not occurring to me as we talk right now, anyway.

RR: Anything in the newspaper career that you would like to have done differently?

EF: I'm sure if I went back and look with some care, I feel sure there'd be a—there would be occasions. I generally feel good about—in my newspaper career. I seriously misjudged Nixon. When word first came out about Nixon's vice president, who was obliged to resign . . .

RR: Spiro Agnew.

EF: Spiro Agnew. Greenberg was ready to dump him shortly before I was, and he acceded to my [*laughs*] greater wisdom, and he—and then I realized that I had made a very bad judgment about that. Or—yeah, if you bring up details, I feel sure there'd be a . . .

RR: Yeah, yeah.

EF: . . . a number.

[04:52:32] RR: Lancaster, in that long article he did for the paper on its one hundredth anniversary, talked about you a good bit and he described your mind or your way of doing thing as being filled—full of orderliness and consistency in your way of thinking. Are—were you aware of that as—on all the years, that you were

an orderly person and that you—when you were talkin' about gettin' ready for this first mountain climb, you planned it. Some fools like—probably, I'm thinkin' of myself—would've just said, "Oh hell, yes! Let's go do it!" and take off for, you know, the next day. But you planned it. Does that—has that been a theme of your life and your [*clears throat*] way of doing things? You like to know where you're headin'—what you're gettin' into?

[04:53:31] EF: Well, I'd like to think I'm not without some spontaneity, but where I think I understand that certain things are—certain skills are gonna be needed or certain endurance is gonna be needed, I think I do try to do that. When I—before I went to Kilimanjaro, that was in [19]86. I had planned that before the sale of the paper. And that was one thing I told Armistead. I said, "I have decided I am not going to let the sale of the paper interfere with my plan to go to Kilimanjaro. I'm not gonna do that." He said, "That's okay." So I was running—my regular run at that time was three miles a day, and I was running from five to seven days a week. And I went to—talked with a doctor and asked him if he had any comments of—about that, and he kinda bent over and thought, and he said, "Well," he said, "I think it might be a good idea if you added some cycling to that, too. You—you're moving those legs, and you're

leaning forward and you"—and so did that. I increased my three miles to four miles a day, and I mostly ran seven days a week.

RR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EF: And then added cycling to it.

RR: Yeah.

EF: And before Fuji, there—to walk up here, the walk that you made up here, there are thirty-seven steps, and I would load up a backpack with two-liter jugs of—and fill 'em with water and walk up and down those steps quite a bit—try to build up leg muscles and whatnot.

RR: Yeah.

EF: And that sort of . . .

[04:55:34] RR: Oh, that would do it. Do you still run?

EF: No, I—my hip doctor told me—I—this—that regular pounding would . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . wouldn't be good.

RR: Yeah, yeah. What do you do for exercise? Or do you have any regular routine?

EF: I go—I've been going for some time three days a week to a—per—to the gym with a personal trainer. I started that in [19]98. Yeah, I started that in [19]98 because my son, Andy,

and his nine-year-old son, Isaac, were going to climb Mount Whitney, and they—and Andy said, "Dad, why don't we make it a three-generation climb?" And so I did a—I started with the gym. I wanted to be able to lift a backpack. [*Laughter*] And so I started [*RR clears throat*] with that and I've kept that—I've kept that up. I have a treadmill up there. [Points upstairs] I've had that from the time we moved in, really, and June thought that was just a waste of money. But as it's turned out, she's more regular with that treadmill than I am.

[04:57:02] RR: Hmm. You mentioned hitchhiking. Was that an act of spontaneity? What—when did you hitchhike somewhere?

EF: The summer of [19]42. It was the summer before I—my eleventh-grade summer, before I—a year before I graduated from high school. And, of course, the war was on, and hitchhiking was much safer than it later became. And everybody was picking up soldiers and young people and that sorta thing. And I had been thinking about the Grand Canyon. I'd never been out there. And gee, I—when I think about spontaneity, I had been working at a church camp as a lifeguard in the early part of the summer, and got—just got back, and I said, "I'm—I wanna go to Grand Canyon." And Carl Purnell was drivin' down the street on his bicycle, and I hollered at him, "Hey, Carl, you

wanna hitchhike out to the Grand Canyon?" He never stopped. He said, "Yeah!" [*RR laughs*] And [*laughter*] so I said, "Okay, I'll call you."

RR: That's spontaneous.

[04:58:13] EF: [*Laughter*] And we did it. And we had some money that we had saved, and we had [*RR coughs*] some travelers' checks, and we had—we both had our parents' permission. And they even drove us up to Little Rock and put us on the west side of Little Rock, and we headed for Oklahoma City and Amarillo, Texas . . .

RR: [*Makes clicking sound with mouth*] Hmm.

EF: . . . and we had thought we'd go—Amarillo, Texas, and Albuquerque and then—oh, what's the jumping-off point for . . .

RR: Well . . .

EF: William . . .

RR: . . . Flagstaff.

EF: Williams is one of 'em. Flagstaff . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . and Williams, and we decided we'd go to Flagstaff and then go to the canyon. But we got sidetracked, and before—we did that, but before we did that, we got sad—sidetracked, and we went to the Carlsbad Caverns together, and we went to El Paso.

And we—I think we were havin' some trouble getting a ride out of El Paso, so we began to think about freight trains. And so we went—[*rustling sound*] to a place where they loaded trains. [*Paper shuffles*] There was a—they had a covered building that was open but covered, and they had all kinds of boxes stacked in there ready to—had been off-loaded or were gettin' ready to be on-loaded—freights—and we inquired bout when the trains went through going west and all that sorta thing. And we were told to expect one, and I had a Baby Ben alarm clock with me, and we went up on top of a whole bunch of boxes. I don't know what they contained. And we moved some around to make a kind of a nest, and we flaked out there until the—and we'd set the alarm clock for a little bit before that train that we were told about was expected. And we got up, and I—I've—[*RR laughs*] and I thought about this—"Now this can be dangerous, and so the important thing to do is when it's—before—the important thing to do is to grab the rungs on the front end of the car because when you swing, as you inevitably will, you'll swing against the side of the car. If you grab the back end, you're gonna swing between the cars, and you're gonna be right over the wheels." And I—each of us had a suitcase—a—with us, and I had taught—I had thought that out in advance, and we talked about that. I

can't remember what he caught, but after all that planning, I caught the rear of the thing, [*laughter*] swung out over the wheels [*RR inhales through teeth*] and held on and swung back and had made it. And we spent—I think we spent at least one night. I think we spent two nights on that train, and finally, they stopped running, and—we—all—put off on a siding, and I think it was Bisbee, Arizona, and we—no, no, it—that's not where—it was—it stopped for a while, and I think the water tank said a rather short—not terribly high water tank said, "Bisbee," and the—and there was a copper mine nearby. I'm not sure why the train stopped, but it was there for some time, and we were hot. And we were under the impression that that water tank, which was up fairly high in the air, was for filling the engines—the boilers. We learned later that that was the water—city water supply or town water supply. But we climbed up that rascal, and it was brim full of water and cool and nice. We jumped in. We swam [*RR laughs*] all around that—in that tank. And we—when we'd splash, some of it would—it was high enough, so that some of it would go over the edge, and then seconds later, we'd hear it splash on the ground. [*Laughs*] We had a great time. And then we—the train started leaving very slowly, and we raced down the ladder and put on our shoes and whatnot. We—and

clothes. We went in our shorts, I guess. And we saw some man approaching us, but we ran and caught the train again before it got away from us. And we—and then later on, we—it did put us off on a siding, and we started hitchhiking again.

RR: Hmm. [*Laughs*] So you all contaminated the water supply of Bisbee, Arizona. [*Laughter*] Oh, what an adventure, though. Oh.

TM: Roy, I need to change really quick. I . . .

RR: Okay. Yeah. [*Clicking sounds*]

[Tape stopped]

[05:03:29] EF: On the way back, we finally went on out to the—to LA and to—I forget the name of that—it starts with an A—on the coast. [*Paper shuffles*] We went for a swim. At first sight of the Pacific Ocean, went for a swim. Too cold to enjoy the water there, so we didn't spend much time in the water. And on the way back, we were outside of Albuquerque, and I had sent the original suitcase that I started with back. It was too heavy. I got—was tired of all the calluses that I was getting on my hands. I sent it back with any gear that I could get rid of, *C-O*—express COD back home, and went to an Army Navy Store and bought a very cheap, smaller suitcase. It was put together with glue, and in Albuquerque, of all places, we were out on the highway

tryin'—or outside of Albuquerque on the highway tryin' to catch—and we went in a thunderstorm, and my suitcase [*RR laughs*] became unglued. And we found a pasteboard box, and I put all my stuff in this [*laughs*] pasteboard box and we—and I—and we got back as far as Amarillo, and we were—now we were—we still had some money left, and we were headin' home and decided we'd stay in a hotel. We'd stayed in many YMCAs, and one time, we spent a night in a car in a—it was unlocked in a used car lot. I think that was in Artesia, New Mexico. But anyway, we decided we'd spend the night in a hotel in Amarillo. It was downtown, and as I was carrying my belongings like this [holds arms forward as if carrying a box] on—and it musta been prom night or something like that because before I entered the hotel, very nicely dressed young women in long gowns came out with very nicely dressed young men. Musta been prom night or somethin', and here I was, co—checking into a hotel [*laughter*] with a pasteboard box.

RR: Trey, did we get that story?

TM: Yes, we did. We're good. We're rollin'.

[05:05:47] RR: Good. Good. Let me jump to Santa Fe. Don't you all keep a place in Santa Fe now?

EF: We do. A cond . . .

RR: Live down . . .

EF: . . . a condo. Uh-huh.

RR: You live there part of the year?

EF: I—it's hard to say that we live there. We get there usually a couple a three times [*paper shuffles*] during the year. We're—are frequently there during the month of August, but we—it we've had it since—we've had it for over twenty years.

RR: Yeah.

EF: And we really haven't worked out a—except for the August thing, we haven't really walk—worked out a pattern.

RR: Yeah.

EF: We've spent some Christmases there—a couple of 'em and—but we don't have a fixed pattern on it.

[05:06:36] RR: What do you do generally when you're there?

EF: There's some mountains around there—the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the Jemez Mountains and there—a—lots of good hiking trails. [*Bird chirps*] I'm interested in the three cultures: the Anglo and the Indian and the Hispanic. And there are lots of—St. John's College there, and that was a—that was an original draw for me there. And it has many cultural activities. They have an excellent opera season and chamber music season and all kinds of things like that.

RR: Are you involved in a Great Books program there?

EF: I'm . . .

RR: Or were you at one time?

EF: Not as—I used to be in Pine Bluff.

RR: Oh.

EF: But I—my own—well, I've attended a number of lectures there. They're open to the public. And on one occasion, June and I signed up for a weeklong seminar on one subject or another. I chose . . .

RR: At the college?

EF: Yeah, at the coll—they . . .

RR: Yeah.

[05:07:49] EF: . . . they have a summer—they have a couple of different summer [*RR clears throat*] programs, and they give you a reading list and they—and then you show up and there—there's small discussion groups with two tutors. They don't call 'em profs; they're tutors. To keep the things going. June chose opera and then attended—not only studied about it but attended a couple of operas there that they were discussing. And I chose Plato—a couple of Plato's dialogues and . . .

RR: Takin' you back to your University of Chicago days?

EF: Yes, it did. My hearing was poor, and I was very self-conscious

trying to do that. I mean, to take part in the seminar. But before it was over, it was—I was so interested, I forgot about being self conscious, and I was leaning forward and cupping my hands [cups hands around ears] listening and . . .

RR: Yeah, yeah.

EF: . . . doing everything I could to hear and take part.

[05:08:55] RR: Would it be fair to say that Plato has enriched your life?

EF: Yes, that would be fair to say. Yeah, it—I think he was a great intellect and also ethically very great. And I would be scared to death to try to establish a state such as he described in *The Republic*. I—I'm—it would be so easy for that—I don't think it's at all practical. It's beautifully done.

RR: But . . .

EF: But I think it could so easily lead into a tyranny. And his—he had much less regard for democracy as a polity than I do. I guess he hadn't anticipated anything like the checks and balances that our forefathers did see the need for.

RR: Yeah, it tur—it's probably turned out in this country to be far different from what he had in mind. Hmm. [*Paper shuffles*] What are you reading now?

EF: What am I reading now?

[05:10:33] RR: What are you reading now? Yeah.

EF: A little bit of David Pryor's book.

RR: Yeah.

EF: I—I've dipped in quite a bit to Roy Reed's book.

RR: Oh, the *Arkansas Gazette* . . .

EF: Yes.

RR: . . . oral history.

EF: I have not read it, but I've read a number of passages from it. That's—you know, that's a—if I could be excused for three minutes, I could answer that question better. For some reason, I have difficulty remembering the names of these.

RR: Certainly. I know what you're sayin'. I—if anybody asked me that question, [*EF laughs*] I'd have to walk to my reading table [*laughter*] and say, "All right, here's what I"—cause I read maybe ten books at once. I don't know if you have that bad habit or not.

EF: I have done that. I'm not reading that many now. Excuse me just a minute.

TM: [*Unclear words*].

RR: But [*laughs*] . . .

[Tape stopped]

[05:11:40] RR: [EF returns with a stack of books] Oh, my. Yeah.

EF: I—these are not all that I'm reading right now.

RR: Yeah.

EF: I didn't take the time to write them down.

RR: Yeah, just—maybe you can just read the titles and—with the camera running and . . .

EF: With . . .

TM: Sure. Yeah, you can hold 'em up. You can just have a seat and hold 'em up if you'd like. [*Rustling sounds*] You want me to help there a minute?

EF: No. [*Laughs*] I'm okay.

RR: Oh.

EF: Thank you.

RR: Okay.

[05:12:06] EF: It—it's a [*RR clears throat*] strange array. [*Chair squeaks*] I—right now I'm reading *Shackleton's Forgotten Expedition*. That's Ernest Shackleton, the polar explorer—Antarctic explorer. *They Stooped to Folly* by a—Ellen Glasgow, who was a Richmond writer and a friend of [James Branch] Cabell's. A bit older than Cabell. She won a Pulitzer Prize. Cabell never did. *Mysteries of the Snake Goddess*. That is not an adventure book. It's a book about archaeology and a museum artifact—a particular museum artifact, the snake

goddess of that comes out of Crete. It's one that Greenberg gave me. *Deja Reviews: Florence King All Over Again*.

RR: Oh, Florence King, yeah.

EF: Do you know who . . .

RR: I—yeah, I know—I've read some of her stuff. Yeah.

[05:13:23] EF: Sh—a—book about a woman by the name of Vali Myers. I—June and I met her one time, and she's now deceased, and an artist, formerly a dancer, I think at one time, mistress of George Plimpton. She—a very strange and interesting woman.

RR: And what's the book?

EF: *Vali Myers*, and that's her name. Vali Myers.

RR: Is that a biography of her?

EF: Yes, it's a . . .

RR: Oh. Oh, okay.

EF: Uh-huh.

RR: Yeah.

EF: And I was interested in her because we've met her. She had—she was originally from Australia but lived in Italy at the time. We met her on an airplane as we were getting ready to deplane in Rome, and she lived near Positano, and we were gonna be hiking inn to inn in Tuscany, but we had planned to drive, then,

down to Positano. And she said, "Well, Love, look me up when you get there." [*RR laughs*] And said, "Well, okay. Okay." I'm—you know, she was talkin' to both [*laughs*] of us.

RR: Yeah.

[05:14:53] EF: And she said—I said, "Well, I—let me know how I should get in touch with you." And she said, "Where are you staying?" And I told her the hotel, and she said, "Oh, they know me there, so just tell them when you get there." And, sure enough, they did, and we met her, and she musta been fifty. Clearly, she had been a—and a very nice-looking, young woman. And her companion was a much, much younger man. I thought his name was Johnny, but it was Gianni.

RR: Gianni. Yeah.

EF: [*Laughs*] And he was a poet and . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: Do—I said one time to this Italian poet that I thought that Italian—I—which I didn't speak—was a beautiful language. He said, "Yes, it is beautiful, but I prefer English."

RR: Well!

[05:15:44] EF: I said, "Well, tell me about that." I said, "You're an Italian poet, and you prefer English. Why is that?" He said, "Well, for two reasons. On the one hand, English can be

coarser, grosser, and more brutal than Italian; and on the other hand, it is capable of greater delicacy and refinement." And I—[*laughs*] and so that was kinda the . . .

RR: The first part I understand, [*EF laughs*] but the second part I'm not sure how [*laughter*] . . .

[05:16:24] EF: And I got interested in—I—a half-brother of Major Newman was named Isaac Newman, and I never met him, and he lived in Virginia, and I was told that he was mentioned in a book. And my—and this is the book because I had heard family stories that he—there was something favorable said about him. And my son-in-law is good with a computer, and while he was listening to me recite that, he—this book is on the web. The whole darn book is on the Web. And he got to the part that I was—I had heard quoted. And so I got the book, and I got one for Armistead, too, and I didn't mean to do so, but I ended up reading this—reading the whole thing. It's called *The End of an Era* by John S. Wise, and he was at one time governor of Virginia, and his father had been an ambassador to one of the South American countries and [*RR coughs*] the . . .

RR: What was the mention of Major Newman in there?

EF: I'm sorry.

RR: What was the reference to Major Newman?

EF: No, the men—the reference was . . .

RR: Or to his brother.

EF: . . . to—was to his half-brother. [Sets books down on the floor and then pauses while paging through book] [*Paper shuffles*]

RR: Trey, I want to get something out of a folder over there.

TM: Okay.

RR: Do you want me to unhook, or do you want . . .

TM: Do you—oh no, I . . .

RR: Or if you'd like to just hand it to me.

TM: I've got it.

RR: It's that stack right there by the—behind the ?wood scuffer?. Yeah. Thank you very much. Yeah. [*Paper shuffles*] [*Airplane flies overhead*]

EF: Now let's see. I'm having trouble without my glasses to find this.

TM: Your glasses?

[05:19:07] EF: Oh, here it is. It—the—I won't read you the incident—"The following incident will convey some idea of the precision of marksmanship attained by constant practice. It was told me repeatedly by Isaac Newman, one of the most fearless and truthful men I ever knew." So that's . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . that's—then—and then he goes on to tell the story that he was told by Isaac.

RR: Yeah, yeah.

EF: Isaac Newman.

[05:19:42] RR: Yeah. Let me come back to Pine Bluff for just a minute. Something Pat Owens told me years ago. He said there is a—an eating or drinking place in Pine Bluff that he referred to always as "the separate-but-equal bar." What's he—what was he talkin' about?

EF: [*Laughs*] I think that was a pla—that was a place near one of the railroad tracks on the east side of Main Street—forget the name of it—and I think they had—I think they had two entrances and ea—and there was a bar on your left as you entered one entrance and a bar on the right, and so there were two bars inside, and they had—the people who were doing the service stood between them. And the blacks went in on one side, and whites went in on the other side. And I think—I saw things like—on the bar, a big jar of pickled, hard-boiled eggs and, you know, things of that sort.

RR: Pigs' feet, I guess.

EF: [*Laughs*] Probably.

RR: But all came outta the central [*EF laughs*] kitchen or bar in the

middle, but the way [*laughs*] ?of serving is too racist?.

EF: And there'd be no problem if you happened to know the person on the other side or just felt talkative. Nothing to prevent you from . . .

RR: You could [*laughter*] . . .

EF: Talking over there.

RR: That's along the same lines of that Coca-Cola box you described earlier with the [*laughter*] white and colored lids. Oh, Lord, the things we got up to maintain—the word "nigger"—is there a—or has there been a class distinction in the use of the word "nigger?" Or do you—or was that one of these—did it cut across class lines? I'm talkin' 'bout the [*unclear words*] white people who used the word. Were you as likely to hear the use of that very objectionable word—as it is seen now, at least—were you as likely to hear it among the upper classes as the lower classes, or was it a poor white person's chosen word?

[05:22:40] EF: I think there was a difference. But having said that, I think that there was at least some use of that term by well-off, and in some cases, educated people.

RR: Yeah.

EF: But I do think it was much more frequent among poorer people that . . .

RR: Yeah.

[05:23:03] EF: In—as I was growing up, the polite—well, the polite way to refer to black people was to refer to them as "colored" people. It was thought that—it was thought by the people who were in my family and by other people that I—that that was either not offensive or much less offensive to black people than to—than even to use the word "Negro." But—and—but Negro is—was in use, and many, many times the pronunciation of Negro was not as careful [*hissing sound in background*] as I'm saying it. It might turn out to be something like "Nigra."

RR: "Nigra." Yeah, yeah.

EF: "Nigra." That sorta . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: That sorta thing.

RR: Yeah. Oh, the nuances of—once you decide that racism is a—an okay policy, then you gotta get into nuance [*EF laughs*] because it'll trip you up.

EF: I always thought it was great that there was no sales tax on the poll tax. [*Laughter*]

RR: Yeah. Yeah, that's right. Well, if you're buyin' 'em wholesale like the planters did. You need to save money where you can.

[05:24:25] EF: One time Armistead was [*RR clears throat*]—

Armistead told me that some planter told him that he was sick and tired of seeing the cotton price quoted in the newspaper. He said he had his ways of finding out the cotton price, and he didn't think it was important for his hands to know anything about that.

RR: Oh my Lord! [*Laughter*] Pine Bluff, as I'm sure you know, down through the years had a reputation. It's kind of an undesirable city in other parts of the state of Arkansas. Was there anything to justify that? I'm sure you don't agree with that summary, but . . .

EF: Well, I know that—this came late, but when the International Paper Company put a mill there, early on, anyway, the—they didn't have [*RR sniffs*] their odor-abatement equipment working very well. And some people objected to that and newcomers there or people who were transient there who were not accustomed to it at all, they found it more objectionable.

RR: Yeah.

EF: I think that—[*RR sniffs*] really, probably largely before my time, I think that there was some feeling that you couldn't—that you perhaps ought to be careful not to annoy some of the law enforcement people because they might be ready with a gun.

RR: Yeah.

EF: That sort of thing. I don't—as I say, that was—I think that was largely before my time, but I heard stories . . .

RR: Hmm. Yeah.

EF: . . . about that. And there was one—I—one very prominent citizen there who—I—who apparently drank a lot, and there was some kind of a disturbance at his house that I learned about, and he was shot and killed by some law enforcement person, and there were a lotta people who felt that that was not necessary. So . . .

RR: Yeah. What . . .

EF: But there were some wonderful [*RR clears throat*] people in Pine Bluff and . . .

[05:27:16] RR: Well, and I've heard Paul Greenberg defend Pine Bluff stoutly, and he was a newcomer who learned to love it. Why did you and Jean—June decide to move up the river to Little Rock?

EF: Quick answer is June wanted to. I was—I had been reluctant to leave Pine Bluff, and it—and she convinced me that it was probably time for us to . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . to do that. And I'm—I don't regret that at all.

RR: Well . . .

EF: I'm . . .

RR: Really? Well, I mean, here—you know, your family were—you were the fourth generation at that paper, if I'm counting right—going back over a hundred years—well over a hundred years. And I would guess that the place would still tug at you some.

[05:28:15] EF: Yes, and I have the—I guess it's Bellwood Cemetery, I have A. G. A. Coleman, my great-great-grandfather, buried, and Major Newman and my grandparents and my parents. Little Clarence Newman, who drowned with a friend at the age of twelve, buried there.

RR: Do you have a burial plot there for yourself?

EF: I think that burial plot is pretty much exhausted now. I'd—I have wondered what I wanted to do. I think probably I'll wanna be cremated. I think June wants to as well. What to do with the ashes, I haven't really decided.

RR: Yeah. Do you still own property there?

EF: In Pine Bluff?

RR: Yeah.

EF: No, but June does. There was a—on Lake Pine Bluff, which used to be the—part of the main course of the river before the river was dynamited many, many years ago—I think maybe in [19]27. I'm not sure, but . . .

RR: Ah, I think I've read that. Yeah.

[05:29:40] EF: There was a—[*RR clears throat*] near the bank, a house built by a black carpenter—a ver—small house, and June said, "Well, we—the fine places are always the ones that are preserved." And at that time, that was more nearly true than it is now, and she thought that this—that a very simple house like this would be worth preserving. And I forget the date of that house. I would—there were boards with marks on 'em that were about this wide. [Gestures to indicate approximately twenty-four inches] The boards are wider than you normally see nowadays. But it was small, and it was not a grand house in the—it was far less than that. She thought that—maybe that—she'd get that preserved or something, and she also thought maybe the area around the lake would be developed at a pace. But the—and she made a number of efforts to try to get some cooperation to—the bank was eroding, and finally, the bank was about this close [gestures to indicate approximately thirty-six inches] to the edge of the—of that house. Well, just in the last year or so, she had given up on anything about it and made a gift of it to the city of Pine Bluff, and I understand that they have now demolished it. I haven't been back to see the—so that is gone, but a—right across the street from that, some vacant—a

couple of small vacant lots that she—that are still in her name.

RR: Good. Yeah.

EF: And that's—and so . . .

[05:31:37] RR: I might get her to talk about that. What else needs to be said? What have we missed? Anything else at all that you'd like to add?

EF: Let me fer—refer to a list that I made a while back and see if there's anything that comes to mind. [*Paper shuffles*] [*Chair squeaks*] With regard to the Sons of the American Legion Tumbling Team . . .

RR: Yes.

EF: . . . and my—the tumbling I'd learned, I didn't do any tumbling at all when I was at The Citadel for that year. But when I went to the naval academy, they didn't get—they didn't get many tumblers. They were surprised that they were getting a plebe who knew anything about tumbling at all, and as a result of that, I was—I got my navy N all three years I was there.

RR: You—I'm sorry, you got . . .

EF: My letter. I lettered in . . .

RR: Oh.

EF: . . . in gymnastics, which . . .

RR: Oh, yeah.

EF: . . . which, in my case, was nothing but tumbling . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . each of the three years that I was there. [*Paper shuffles*] I don't see anything that . . .

RR: Okay. All right. Well, if you think of anything, I'm sure we can . . .

[05:33:28] TM: We can get—I've got one more. [*Clears throat*] Seems like you've spent a good part of your life in river towns. Do you have any river stories? Now you mentioned maybe the 1927 dynamiting the river or—I mean, or any type of river stories?

EF: That—the—1927 woulda been—I woulda been one year old then, and so all I know about that is—you know, is pretty much hearsay. I mean, it's altogether hearsay. I know that the Free Bridge was—it was higher than the surrounding land, and a lot of people were repaired there and were rescued from there. Among them was a woman who worked for us. She—after the birth of our first child, she had been [*unidentified sound in background*] working on the farm chopping cotton and picking cotton and so forth, Geneva, Geneva Byrd, and she was first—she first came for half a day every second week. And then over a period of time, she was there more often. She never did any

cooking, but she did cleaning and looked after the kids some and that sorta thing. And that continued for over thirty years until she retired. And after she retired, we had been to her house a number of times, and it was drafty and not a very pleasant place to live, and so June arranged to get a manufactured home for her. She had a lot that . . .

RR: June did?

[05:35:22] EF: Yeah. And she had—when she started working for us, she lived in Pine Bluff, and she—so it was easy for her to commute. Her husband died, and [*RR coughs*] finally, she married another man, and they moved to Tucker. And—but she contin—she commuted from Tucker even though that was a bit of a different chore. And then when she finally retired, we put this manufactured home there, and she lived in that for some time. And it—you know, it was air-conditioned and . . .

RR: Yeah.

EF: . . . and all that.

RR: Oh, oh.

[05:36:03] EF: And she's now in a assisted living place, and she decided to go back to Pine Bluff. She lived in Little Rock for a while, and after she, essentially, rented the manufactured home [to a tenant]. But she was in there for a number of a years, and

then the proceeds from that rental or sale, if that's what it turns out to be, are—go to a close friend who is supposed to use it for Geneva's benefit. It—we didn't want to complicate matters for her by having it go directly to her.

RR: Right. Right. And you say he—she had been in the flood in [19]27?

EF: Yeah, so she's . . .

RR: And went up to the bridge.

EF: Yeah, and my goodness, that—how I got digressed on [*laughs*] . . .

RR: No, no, no, that—[*EF laughs*] I'm glad you did because—I mean, that was a fine thing that you-all did for her . . .

EF: That was really . . .

RR: . . . in her later years.

EF: . . . June. June had to do that. She had to do that.

RR: But I guess if she hadn't been able to make it to the bridge, she mighta been one of the victims of the flood. I mean, physically, she mighta [*laughs*] been swept away or . . .

EF: Might very well . . .

RR: Low parts of town. Yeah. [*Makes clicking sound with tongue*] Anything else that comes to mind?

EF: I don't believe so.

[05:37:33] RR: Okay. Well, if it comes to you in a dream tonight, we'll [*laughter*] take it up again to—tomorrow before we put June on the stand.

EF: [*Laughs*] Okay. Well, I . . .

RR: Thank you very much, Ed.

EF: Well, thank you. I can say now that I—I've enjoyed this, quite contrary to my expectations. I have enjoyed both of the interviews today.

RR: Well, good. I'm glad.

EF: I was—early on, I had a lot of anxiety about it, and it—and the thought that it could be a—an enjoyable experience. It had not crossed my mind, but it has been, and I thank . . .

RR: Well, I'm glad.

EF: I thank you [*laughs*] . . .

RR: I'm awfully glad.

EF: . . . and I thank Scott, too. [*Laughter*]

[05:38:20 End of interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]