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

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Arkansas Memories

Judy Norrell

Interviewed by Scott Lunsford and David Pryor Jr.

May 14, 2021

Green Bay, Virginia

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Objective

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

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

Transcript Methodology

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

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/ redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.

Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

Brackets enclose
- italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing and
- annotations for clarification and identification.

- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Judy Norrell was interviewed by Scott Lunsford and David Pryor Jr. on May 14, 2021, at the Norrell residence in Green Bay, Virginia.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: This is May 14, 2021, and we're at the Norrell [Nar'-el]—is it Norrell [Nor'-el]?

Judy Norrell: In Arkansas you'd say Norrell [Nar'-el]. But most people, inclu—I use both. But in many people's cases, they say Norrell [Nor-rel'] because it's easier to spell. Think you understand.

SL: So the spelling is *N-O-R-R*—two Rs, two Ls?

JN: Correct.

SL: *N-O-R-R-E-L-L*.

JN: But in Arkansas you would—it—I would be Judy Norrell [Nar'-el]. And at one point when I came to Monticello and was with the daughter of the—of Yates Trotter who's—the Trotters are a fam—Drew County family. And she was four years ahead of me, but a big influence in my life. And I said I was Judy Norrell [Nor-rel']. She leveled her eyes at me and said, "And I'm Patricia Trottere." [*Laughter*]

SL: Okay. Well, Judy . . .

JN: So you can call me anything you want. [*Laughs*]

[00:01:05] SL: Okay. And what is your full name? Is it Judith?

JN: No.

SL: Or Julia?

JN: It's actually—I don't like it, but it's Julia Jean Norrell or Norrell.

SL: So just . . .

JN: And nick—Judy is a nickname, but it's the name I'm best known by.

SL: Okay. And just of interest, Barbara's middle name is Jean.

JN: I didn't know that.

SL: And we're at your residence in Virginia. And it looked like to me the closest town was Green Bay?

JN: Well, it's my mailing address. It's sort of a crease in Route 460. You see it. The closest town I go to is Victoria, Virginia.

SL: Okay.

JN: And we're not too far from Farmville, which is bigger and houses Longwood University, which is part of the University of Virginia system, and houses Hamden-Sydney.

[00:02:04] SL: So you—you're—let's talk a little bit about your mom and dad. First of all, you were adopted.

JN: I was.

SL: And so there's no recollection of birth mother or father. We don't even know . . .

JN: No. What I do know is that it was in 1935, and I was born in a hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. And when I lost a passport in Europe, I had to try to find—and if you were adopted, at least in those years in Arkansas, you had a certificate of birth, not a—or not a birth certificate. And I needed from the US State Department a birth certificate. And I called Memphis, and they changed me over to Nashville. And all the children adopted in 1935 and maybe a year before and after were involved in that historical kidnapping of children.

SL: Yeah, I kinda remember some . . .

JN: And then being basically sold but given for adoption elsewhere. And it was pretty well documented. So if I lost my passport today and had to ask Memphis, they'd refer it because I'm in the batch of when children were stolen.

SL: Wow.

[00:03:26] JN: And I found that fascinating, although I was older when that happened. And it happened to me when I was in London, probably when I was a sophomore or something in college in the early [19]50s. But I was all—I don't remember ever being told I was adopted. I was always conscious of it, and rarely did I think much about it. Every now and then 'cause I was an only child. And usually it's when your own parents are

older and dying you wish you had a sibling to help.

SL: Right.

JN: Other than that, I think that I'm sort of like Lou Gehrig in saying farewell. I've had a pretty fortunate life. And my father, whose father died before he was born when he was thrown from a horse in Milo, Ashley County, Arkansas, was the youngest of five children.

SL: Wow.

JN: And his mother somehow raised them. And he is the Hor—or was the Horatio Alger type. He walked to school, literally. He was in the First World War in the Quartermaster Corps. And then in those days you could read for the law, but you read in an office. You didn't have to have a law degree.

SL: Exactly.

JN: And he did. And for a long time he had the highest recorded bar score in Arkansas. And he moved to Monticello. And he liked the practice of law and was successful. But I was born in [19]35, and he was elected to Congress in [19]39 in the 76th Congress. And so in my lifetime with my father, he was never not an office holder because he was in the state senate when—before he ran for Congress.

[00:05:22] SL: So you were then constantly going back and forth

between Washington, DC, and Monticello.

JN: Well, at least from—yeah, once he was elected. And in those days, it was a long—it was 1,350 miles from Monticello, as I recall, to Washington, DC. And I think our first apartment was in the Methodist Building, which is next to the Supreme Court. It's still there today. And then I think we moved to the Westchester. But I hated Washington at first because I didn't have my horse, [*SL laughs*] and I didn't have my bird dogs. And I thought these were very sissified, odd people.

[00:06:08] SL: Let's drop back a little bit. Did you ever get to visit your father's homestead? His family?

JN: Yes.

SL: And did you get to meet some of his . . .

JN: I did.

SL: . . . siblings and . . .

JN: He had a brother, John, who they always told me had been in the Texas Rangers. I kind of doubt that. [*SL laughs*] I think they thought I'd like that. And he never married. He lived in Hamburg. And he would come—if we were in Monticello, Mother would do Thanksgiving, or sometimes we did Christmas, and John would come, and he drove a Model T but kept it so you could see yourself reflected in it. And so actually he had two

sisters. They both were mainly in Ashley County, but one, Sarah Tyson, was actually a housemother later in her life at Arkansas A&M in Monticello. And we saw a lot of her. And his other sister and her husband lived and were on land, I think, a farm. But I didn't have a lot of contact 'cause I wasn't there all the time.

SL: Right. Right. Now what about your mother's side of the family?

[00:07:30] JN: Well, Mother was the daughter of a Baptist minister who was wi—W. F.—I think it was William Franklin Dorris, *D-O-R-R-I-S*. I believe she was born in Camden, Arkansas. And she went to Ouachita but didn't graduate because of the Depression. And so what money they had they spent on the boys and not on educating or finishing the education of the girls.

SL: We're talking Ouachita Baptist College.

JN: Ouachita Baptist in Arkadelphia, I think. Mother was a gifted musician. And she certainly—she was a—she certainly had a lot of organizational ability. She was the typical wife in a small town of a lawyer. She belonged to the cirrhosis club and the bridge club and the this and the that. She played the piano and/or the organ . . .

SL: At church.

JN: . . . at the First Baptist Church in Monticello, Arkansas. She certainly had all those Southern women skills. And yet probably,

although I didn't realize till later, she probably was a bit of an uppity woman.

SL: [*Laughs*] How'd you come about that realization?

[00:08:51] JN: Well, 'cause I think she had—you know, if—think of hell on earth. Think of being a minister's daughter, where everyone in the congregation can talk about what your husband did wrong or this or that, and a politician's wife.

SL: Right.

JN: So she was used to having to keep her mouth shut or try to be charming. And you know, it wears on your nerves after a period of time.

SL: Sure.

JN: So I think sh—and when she went to Washington—you know, it must be frightening, or was at those—in those days for the wives, 'cause usually it was the wife, it was the female—of any member of Congress, unless you were very sophisticated, unless you knew white tie as opposed to black tie, unless you knew you had to leave cards, calling cards, for the wife of the Supreme Court—the wife of the chief justice. There was a Emily Post kind of protocol.

SL: Of course.

JN: That was something. It had to be intimidating. The salary, as I

recall, and I may be wrong, but I think it was $10,000 a year, if that. That's a lot if you don't have independent means . . .

SL: Exactly.

JN: . . . to dress and to compete with women who had husbands from New York or Rhode Island and chauffeurs and servants.

[00:10:20] SL: What about her mom and dad? Did you get to meet her mom and dad?

JN: I—oh, yes, very [*laughs*] definitely. Her father was interested in books. He was fairly well read, and he liked to read, but he could actually read some Greek, et cetera. And I think was educated, although much of it maybe self. I liked him because he was—he introduced me to books or to the feel of books.

SL: Okay.

[00:10:50] JN: And I used to read a lot. When he would be in our study reading, I'd have a book, and I'd do what they call blah-blah. I'd just create and read along and make up stories [*SL laughs*] and that sort of thing. But his wife, who was originally from Grand Rapids, Michigan, was a very overbearing person. And I really never liked her. And I don't think she liked me. I think she resented the fact that I, the adopted child, came in to what by most definitions would be the most successful of the family. And she always wanted to advance an older cousin . . .

SL: Course.

JN: . . . Bruce, you know. And actually I found that she was so busy being religious, thumping the Bible, telling you, that I sometimes wondered what happened to the Christianity that was supposedly comprised. So if I'm truthful, I think we really tolerated each other.

SL: And that . . .

JN: And but it wasn't a warm thing. You didn't—and of course, you never went to your grandparents because they were always—we—they both lived with us until they died.

[00:12:13] SL: Gosh. So how—what is your earliest memory of your mom and dad?

JN: You know, I don't know in a conscious sense. I've kin—in contemplating what it might be, I think it would be of my father. And I was a father's daughter. I thought my father walked on water. He—and he was six foot two. He wasn't a macho man. But he always wanted to get to some degree of truth. He never lied to me. If I asked a question that you might think you oughta ask when you were twelve, and I was eight, he'd give me an answer. He didn't beat around or anything. He would say. Now I don't have most Southern women skills. I can't—I can barely boil water [*SL laughs*] without scorching it. And I'm just

not the traditional . . .

SL: Yeah.

JN: . . . woman of the South. But my father I can hear now saying, "Oh, Catherine"—my mother's name was Catherine—"let her read." He always encouraged me. There was nothing he ever said I couldn't attempt to do regardless of gender. Until the rumor was out I was out for the Monticello Hillbillies football team, and I was playing semi-pro sandlot softball. And at that point, they sort of gently moved me to Washington, and I went to a private girls' school.

[00:13:54] SL: That's interesting. So. The earliest memories were in Monticello, you think?

JN: Yes, I'm sure.

SL: And do you—so I'm assuming . . .

JN: And we'd go to Little Rock when the legislature was in session.

SL: Right.

JN: I don't remember anything about Little Rock, except I would go—I—when—you know, if you lived in Monticello, you went to Little Rock to shop or to go to Franke's . . .

SL: Sure, yeah.

JN: . . . and eat custard pie.

SL: That's right.

JN: And I do remember I—he would take me to the state capitol. So I saw the state capitol. I saw places he liked. But I don't consciously remember being in Little Rock. Except you heard about it, and you drove up in the car with them. They didn't leave me at home. They took me.

[00:14:48] SL: Right. So. Gosh, you were so young before you all started going back and forth to Washington, DC. Do you remember the house routines in Monticello growing up?

JN: Well, I remember the house vividly on East Jackson Street, which they'd built. It was this—and it's still there, to my knowledge. It was a very simple, one-story, duck-brick house three doors from the Methodist church. And it had a screened in por—sleeping porch.

SL: Of course.

JN: Had two bedrooms.

SL: Yep.

JN: Had a big kitchen with a little separate, you know, place you could eat, had a formal dining room. And the room I loved always was the so-called sun porch, but it had wall-to-ceiling bookcases.

SL: Wow.

JN: Filled with books. And I loved that room. It was my favorite

room. And there was a chaise lounge that would fit me. And I could sit and blah-blah, or when I could read [*laughs*] I could actually read books. And I always wanted to own books, and they bought them for me because I wanted my books. And only later did I give the Drew County public library a number of my children's books. But I read most of the classics. I read *Lassie* and *My Friend Flicka* and all. I was very much involved with horses and dogs.

[00:16:27] SL: So horses and dogs. Was that from visiting your grandparents that you . . .

JN: No, I think I just—it was something I wanted. And something—and I think, again, it's easier sometimes—I loved to go to a stable that was in walking distance or bicycle distance of the house. It was owned by Virgil White of the White Family that's originally, I think, from Wilmar. But my family was appalled 'cause on Saturday, you know, people ate in there, men swore, they rolled dice, they certainly drank illegal alcohol. Drew County has been dry my entire life I think, unless it's gotten wet recently. And so I loved to go there and see the horses and smell them and talk 'em. I think they gave me a horse to get me out of Virgil White's [*SL laughs*] because it was considered a very unsavory place if you were going to be any kind of

Southern girl or woman.

SL: Right.

JN: But I always loved it. And my dog would go with me, and I'd look at the horses, and they'd let me ride and all. So that came from just loving that environment.

[00:17:46] SL: Right. So were you a part at all of—did your mother prepare the meals for . . .

JN: Mother did, or the grandmother while she was living. And then we usually had help. Not a nanny . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . but we would have someone who could help prepare or who could be there when they went off to go to meetings or—Mother was active in the Eastern Star, Father was active, you know—in the congressional world, you've got to go to the county seat of every county so often.

SL: Right.

JN: And when I was old enough to drive, I'd drive Father, and we'd go to the courthouse in Garland County, for example, or Lincoln County. And then as you age, in my case, there were the counties you really liked to go to. And in case one had voted against my father—I would almost close my eyes and run through Lincoln County. I think once they didn't vote for Father,

and I've never cared . . .

SL: For Lincoln County.

JN: . . . for [*laughs*] Lincoln County since.

SL: Well, I can understand that.

JN: I've had friends from Lincoln County but—someone said, "She's going to have a wreck. She just closes her eye and blitzes through Lincoln County."

[00:19:11] SL: My father—David Pryor likes to tell the story that they were driving around outside of Fayetteville over in Elkins when David was probably still in law school. And they're driving along, and Dad points at a house that's on top of a mountain across the field and says, "A Republican lives there." [*Laughter*] They were so few and far between.

JN: You know, that could be true for a while at Drew County. Now it's totally reversed.

[00:19:49] SL: Right. Right, right. So were you saddled with any—pardon the horse riding thing—but did you have things that were expected of you in the household?

[00:20:06] JN: You know, that's kind of hard to answer. I was expected to do well in school. I was respect—expected to be reasonably polite. [*SL laughs*] I was expected to be curious, actually, to seek beyond whatever I knew or the small

dimensions. And because of the two locales or venues, if you wanna call them that, of Drew County, Arkansas, and Washington, DC, I was taken—I was born February 12, which is Lincoln's birthday. My father loved history, so they would drive—as we drove 1,350 miles two or sometimes four times a year, they would drive to see that I saw every Civil War battlefield or that I went to Gettysburg. So I was steeped in expectations that I would be interested. And that—the hope of my father—I'd love history. I was steeped on my mother's side more in religion or the practice of religion, let's say, of the church. But I was never dominated by it. And only later in life did I realize the huge role played by churches, I think, in the South more than anywhere else . . .

SL: Oh.

JN: . . . I've ever lived.

[00:21:35] SL: Yeah, it's a common area of discussion in all the interviews I've ever done. I mean, Sunday best. You know, there were a set of clothes that folks had for Sunday. And interesting enough, it sounds like to me you were spared doing laundry. You were spared doing dishes. You were spared . . .

JN: I was, pretty much.

SL: . . . working in the yard or doing chores around the house.

So . . .

JN: Well, I wasn't a little China doll, but I was allowed to kind of have my own wings. And I think that because I had a horse, whether to keep me out of the livery stable and the dice and all—I think that allowed me to explore Drew County and our different economic groups, different housing situations. And there's nothing like riding at dawn and the soft beat of a horse's hooves on dirt roads and the smell of coffee. And you see people in a light I would never have seen them. And there are very few things I'm unequivocally certain of in life. One is my father loved the people of the Sixth Congressional District in Arkansas and Arkansas. And I never go to Arkansas without thinking of that. No matter how backward, how much I may disagree, what my own opinion is, I'm sort of anchored by his belief and his belief he could make a difference. And as a matter of practical fact he did make a difference. And parties. We—you know, there was the Second World War.

SL: Yeah.

[00:23:24] JN: I remember Christmas when—if you're a kid, you wanna open, you wanna see what gifts you're getting, et cetera, and you wanna go play with the other kids. Because of a call where someone asked if their only surviving son—because the

other last surviving male had been killed in Europe.

SL: Right.

JN: Father spent a great part of that Christmas talking to the War Department—there was no Pentagon there then—to get that boy home. And I have used that. When people ask me—I think there are great advantages to being part of a political family. And there's a liability. And it takes a toll too.

SL: Of course.

[00:24:09] JN: But I got on a flight from Washington going to Little Rock once. A couple came and sat down. They said to me, "Where are you from?" or, "Where are you going?" And I said, "Little Rock." And they said, "Where are you from?" And I said, "Monticello." And the woman said, "That's my hometown." And we sort of chatted. And then she said, "You know, there's a congressman from Monticello who, on Christmas Day, got my brother home from Europe. And I will never, never forget that." And I said, "I'm his daughter."

SL: Wow.

JN: And she said—because they were in the nursing home business or something. And she said, "We own the nursing home in Warren," which—Bradley County, which wasn't in our district, but I certainly knew Warren. "And we own this and that." And

she said, "If you ever need, anything, call us. If we have to build a nursing home, [*SL laughs*] there'll be a place for your mother."

SL: That's—you know, that is—that's a great example of what can happen if a congressman puts his mind to it.

[00:25:26] JN: But you see, in the—when I grew up—Arkansas, I think when Father went to Congress, had seven House members and obviously two Senate, but they were all, to me, father images.

SL: Right.

JN: And they had children. I mean, Oren Harris had a daughter who later went to the University of Arkansas. Jim Trimble's children were older than me. But when you think of the Second World War, the pressures, the committees they were on, the seniority they garnered—these were all decent human beings. Now they were all Democrats. But in truth, no matter how deep the political rivalries, say, perhaps the—whatever the relationship between Fulbright and McClellan was, you were proud of them because you knew they tried. And the navigability of the Arkansas River—Father was number two when he died on the Appropriations Committee in the House. John McClellan was chairman of Appropriations in the Senate. Well, you don't go

and look at the dams and the levees and look at the Arkansas River and what has happened economically as a result without realizing you heard that night after night. You knew the tradeoffs. Al Carter was a congressman from California, but he would trade—Father'd help him get something for his district in California to get something for Hot Springs, Arkansas, or to get something for Arkansas. I think that in truth, I may be mistaken, but I think that I was very fortunate to be a congressional child at a time when—and I know you can argue about any of them in their voting records, but when someone—I never doubted their integrity.

SL: There was an honor to it.

[00:27:32] JN: And they were honorable men. Now today as I look at—and Fulbright for me is the difficult phenomena. I had great regard for Bill Fulbright.

SL: Sure.

JN: It is true that when I was a kid, you know, other kids do whatever—Father's a realtor. They think they're selling houses, or a banker thinks they'll make change and be a teller. I actually had a white table in the front lawn of our house, and I'd hop up there and give political speeches. When Fulbright first ran for the Senate, one of the candidates was Colonel Barton

from El Dorado.

SL: Okay.

JN: And Colonel Barton told the story as long as he lived of going to see Father. And I was up on the table giving the neighbor children a lecture. But as he was walking in the house, he heard me say, "And vote for J. William Fulbright. He's the only one with any education." [*Laughter*] And he came in, and he said to my father, "Your daughter is something else out there." Well, later, and this was typical of Father, he said, "Honey, why don't we move your table, your speaking place, to the backyard?" And I said, "No, I'm not moving to the backyard. Who would hear me?"

SL: [*Laughs*] That's good. That's savvy. How old were you then?

JN: I was probably ten or so.

[00:29:02] SL: Wow. That's something else. So obviously your time in working with your—I get the impression that you and your father were very close and that you were very proud of his work and that he was very attentive and caring for your well-being.

JN: And because I was an only child, you'd hear the dinner conversation. You were part of it.

SL: Right.

JN: I always knew—and I loved to go to the courthouse, and I liked to watch trials. But because of the Second World War, I think I was more aware than many people of the suffering and what the role of a congressman was. It wasn't just about legislation. It was about how do you help so-and-so get whatever they need. And for example, Army-Navy football tickets. New York members didn't give a rat's ass about the farmer's yearbook or whatever almanac that was published by the Department of Agriculture. We traded Army-Navy tickets for more agricultural yearbooks or publications that could be sent out.

SL: Right.

JN: In fact, V.L. Cox found one that said "From your congressman, W. F. Norrell," in an antique store, and somewhere in this house I have it now because she bought it and sent it to me from an antique store, I think in ar—I know in Arkansas.

SL: Yeah, she's good about . . .

JN: But . . .

SL: . . . ginning up and buying what's in front of her if she thinks someone would . . .

JN: But I'm just saying I think I was more involved because they shared more with me. And because on these long trips, you had to talk about something.

SL: Right.

JN: You know, you've been driving from Monticello to Washington.

[00:31:01] SL: So back in—back at home, both homes, was there any kind of structure around the family meals? I mean, where you expected to be at the table . . .

JN: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . at a certain hour?

JN: Well, pretty much. Now of course, the one who was always late and mucked that totally up was my father because someone would come in at the courthouse.

SL: Right.

[00:31:25] JN: My job, often—you will find this, I think, amusing. My job used to be when the Chamber of Commerce of Arkansas came to Washington for their big dinner and all—and that was a, you know, an important ha-ha. My family could never understand this. I was al—well, often, if not always, seated at the Fulbright table. And they got tired of hearing me talk about Fulbright. [*SL laughs*] And he was the most educated and the finest one and I just didn't know why we didn't elect more people like Fulbright. They controlled themselves [*laughs*], but I'm sure they got . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . tired of hearing it.

SL: Right.

[00:32:01] JN: But the interesting thing was Betty Fulbright, who I really admired and liked, would seat me so I was in kicking range of Bill Fulbright under the table. And so when the mayor of Pine Bluff or Cabot or some smaller town, usually, would come and be waiting to talk to the Senator, he'd be talking to some Ph.D. from Columbia who'd been invited down, and they'd be discussing international affairs.

SL: Right.

JN: And the poor Arkansas constituent was lucky if he could get attention. Betty would look at me, and I would kick Bill Fulbright, [*SL laughs*] meaning, "Pay attention to what—who that is." And so I guess, you know, you got a feel for these things.

SL: Right.

[00:32:51] JN: And when—and my mother—when Mother was Worthy Grand Matron of the Eastern Star—and we would stay at the Albert Pike Hotel when it would be at the Albert Pike Memorial. People would give me money in the elevator, you know, and I thought, "Well, this is a good deal." Later, when Carter was elected president, someone who was in the Carter

administration but not a Southerner called and said, "Do you think Ruth Clusen," who was then—had been president of the League of Women Voters, and I'd worked for Ruth, and she was a very good friend. She was from Wisconsin. "Do you think—have you ever heard of this group she belongs to? It's on her security clearance form. We don't know that we can appoint her." And I said, "Well, what group are you talking about?" And they said, "Something called the Order of the Eastern Star." [*Laughter*] And I said, "It's safe, believe me."

SL: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JN: "Don't tell Jimmy Carter you think it's a suburban—subversive organization."

SL: My mother was a member of that as well.

JN: Well, I never have been much of a joiner, per se. But again, it gave them joy. And you know, it was kind of secret.

SL: Right.

JN: And I liked the money, actually. If people wanted to give me money in the elevator, I thought it was a fine organization.

[00:34:14] SL: [*Laughs*] That's funny. So I'm trying to—Monticello and Washington, DC, are kind of day and night, aren't they? I mean, as far as . . .

JN: Black and white.

SL: Black and white.

JN: They are, except—and this is hard for many of my friends from Arkansas plus almost impossible for non-Arkansas friends to understand. For me, it's always been a conflict of love and hate, really. And at times I compare it to an unrequited love affair. I'd like to love you, but you [*laughs*] do so many things I can't stand.

SL: Right.

JN: And I can't stand for.

SL: Right.

JN: On the other hand—Mary Louise Towler Rae, who lives in Little Rock now and on June 25 will be eighty-six, too. And her father was the sheriff in Drew County.

SL: Okay.

JN: Mary Louise, who's a Republican—she's to the right of Hitler, from . . .

SL: Oh my god.

JN: . . . my perspective, politically. But we love each other. But Mary Louise would say to people—'cause I'd come home, and you know, they'd fix ham and corn and tomatoes from Drew County, which was the tomato capital of the world. The food was so good. Barbara Pryor's done this for me, too, at times.

And I would come home, and Mary Louise would say, "Hmm, she's gotten through forty-eight hours and thinks she's in heaven. [*SL laughs*] But she's going to make a reservation early back in about twenty-four more hours." And more often than not, that was true.

SL: Was true.

[00:36:07] JN: But a lot of the difference was certainly over race and the integration of the schools and the Southern Manifesto. And I do remember that period vividly. And I think one of the most exceptional events of my life was when the Southern Manifesto was up. I was in college on my parent's dime and in the Midwest. And I was stunned to think that my father would sign the Southern Manifesto. But when I called, and of course, I was quite free at calling collect to give him my advice . . .

SL: Of course.

JN: . . . politically on courses that would have been sure suicide. And so I called and said, "How can you sign that? And we need to have this and all." And he was quiet. And then he said—and I believe the filing deadline used to be April 1, and I thought it was perfect for Arkansas. File for election on the—April Fool's Day.

SL: Fool's day. Of course.

[00:37:12] JN: It's just perfect. But he called me back, and he said to me—and he meant it—"Honey, if I'm ask"—and by then I was college age. I was twenty-one or about to be. He said, "If it—if I'm asking you to compromise your values for me to run for office, I won't run."

SL: Wow.

JN: "Call me back before the deadline." And a few, not a covey of people, but a few close African American friends who were in college with me said, "Don't do that. If you think it's bad now, think what will succeed. Think how awful you'll feel." But I have never forgotten that I—he would have done it. What an overwhelming gesture, I thought. And I did call back, and he ran. Now he had major health problems his last ten or fifteen years.

SL: Uh-oh.

JN: And so you know, if you're in the family, you know that a trip to the emergency room may also be a trip to the cemetery.

SL: Yeah.

JN: But of course, you say they're just healthy as horses, you know . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . [*laughs*] and they're going to go out of this gate or that

gate, and you defend. And that's why Mother—I always went with them because he had lost hearing in one ear, and it looked as if—'cause they tried to put the nerve back together. But it wasn't that he'd had a stroke at the time, but he looked as if he had.

SL: Oh.

JN: And he couldn't hear in one ear. And so one of us would go and drive him. And also we would have notebooks. Who was the sheriff? Who was the judge? Who was—who supported us? Who didn't support us? Who did we have to call if we were in Garland County or if we were in Saline County or Jefferson or whatever? And so part of that, I think, was great education for me in how you handle the political part of life along with the compassionate part. And I was very lucky because I had more time than a lot of people had with their fathers.

[00:39:38] SL: So it's inte—how did Arkansas lose the six congressional districts? Di—you said at one point in time there were seven.

JN: I think there were seven. You could check that. I haven't . . .

SL: Okay.

JN: . . . recently. I think there were seven when my father went to Congress. And I think his first time was the 76th Congress. I

think you lost because you lost population. And a lot of people went to California or went elsewhere.

SL: Right.

JN: And so—and then I think we continued for a while to lose population.

SL: Yeah. All the way down to four. That's pretty significant.

[00:40:19] JN: And I think that—and we worried about it, you know. But actually, health endangered him politically more than anything else.

SL: Thing else. Yeah.

JN: He refe—I think he voted pretty well what people believed in. I don't think there was—he wasn't as controversial. He didn't have anything to compare with, say, what Mills went through later.

SL: Right.

JN: There was no scandal. When he was elected to office, I was told by my mother and others, he sold every bit of stock. He didn't have a lot, but he sold anything that he thought could create a conflict of interest and said, "It's not worth it to me."

SL: Yeah.

JN: Now later I was sort of embarrassed when he died because, compared to my Holton-Arms private school classmates, many of

them in Washington, I thought his estate looked pretty dinky. You know, I was almost embarrassed. What [*laughs*] had he been doing all these years that he hadn't made much?

SL: Right.

JN: But I do know, again, of the few things I would say unequivocally, he was an honest politician.

SL: Which . . .

JN: Well, now . . .

SL: Now you . . .

JN: And I think that was true of the Arkansas delegation for some time.

SL: I agree with that.

[00:41:45] JN: And I can't say—for the first time in my life if you named me to ah—to name the congressional delegation of the state of Arkansas beyond the two senators, I'm not sure I could name them all.

SL: I'm with you on that. And I'm embarrassed to admit that but . . .

JN: Well, I never thought that day would come. It's not because I'm such a partisan. And certainly Father and others got along with—and David Pryor did in the Senate. You cut deals, and you cared about other people. If you think about it, the Southern

Manifesto and the refusal to sign it cost Al Gore Sr. his Senate membership. He was defeated. Charles Weltner, who was a Georgia House member, was defeated. Now you can go into—and I majored in philosophy. You can go into the question of is it better to be true to thyself and a steady course, or is it better to be pragmatic and be able to serve? And I think it's an age-old question, but now people don't ask that. People don't mind on either side using propaganda that is not based on fact in elections . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . accusing people of things they're innocent of, brin—dragging in families in unseemly ways. None of us as children, I think, were dragged through anything in any political race. So I long for the days when I think we had not only a more civil discourse, but a discourse based actually on some facts.

SL: [*Laughs*] Right.

[00:43:38] JN: Something you could defend or there was—it was worth arguing about. You think it's important to get rural electricity. Someone else says, "No. We need something else." You could prioritize differently and still have sane discussion. When I read one of the first biographies of Lyndon Johnson years ago, he had a fixation on rural electrification. But when I think

about it, the few memories I have of going to Ashley County to see Father's relatives was before there was electrification. I at least . . .

SL: It's life changing.

JN: . . . saw—I had a child's glimmer, but I knew what life was like in homes with no electricity. And I knew why Lyndon Johnson, my father, and others fought to get it. And I'm sitting down here in rural Virginia. And you want better health care. You want all those things that are perhaps not equally distributed between urban and rural areas. But you realize—all these people—you can say what you want about Lyndon Johnson—his colossal ego. The man was a very skilled political figure, but he actually did, I think, have a soul.

SL: Oh, I . . .

JN: And the soul was to get things for his people. And I guess I miss those kinds of politics. Rough and tumble to some extent. But what do we have now?

SL: It's . . .

JN: It's more like a child throwing stuff in the playground, I think.

SL: Yeah.

[00:45:28] JN: And I must say, now that I'm on my tirade, I must say that I'm absolutely appalled at the current legislative record

in the state of Arkansas towards transgender, lesbian, and gay. I cannot believe we're doing this. And I can't believe in part because when I was in college, Arkansas passed, and it was enacted into law, a blood bill. That blood bill said that all blood had to be typed or, you know, identified as Caucasian or non-Caucasian. Well, again, I'm sitting at Ohio Wesleyan majoring in philosophy, many would say in never-never land or half-bright land. I was often called a half-bright scholar. [*SL laughs*] But as I went through that, I kept saying to—again calling poor Father, you know, that—and of course it was a state, not a federal issue at the time. I—"That's just too much. Too much." And so at a point it—they suddenly noticed doctors were leaving the state in droves. Why? Not that they were all so principled, although many may have been. They couldn't get medical malpractice. The companies wouldn't underwrite that law. What did Arkansas do? It shook itself awake and repealed the law. Now you would think that might have come up, and maybe it did, as they enact these new laws. But why would you want to, I think, penalize a transgender child who didn't ask to be born that way? An eight-year-old who needs hormonal—especially female children, hormonal drugs? Why would you make them a criminal or their parents to try to do what you could to give the

child whatever life works best. And the me—I don't know a lot about transgenders. I just know I'm appalled that Arkansas, and there're other states, are letting someone in a community that cranks out certain philosophies and writes the legislation say, "Enact this." I cannot see the good of that. I can't see the Christianity of it. I can't see the humanity of it. To me, it's man's worst inhumanity against man. And I'm ashamed that it's happening in Arkansas again. I'm appalled, actually.

[00:48:14] SL: Well, I don't understand it either. But it seems to me that there's a target for—there's a clientele that represents 30 or 40 percent, somehow or another, that if they can just keep that, then they can wiggle around and get enough to beat somebody, you know, in office. It's—I can't believe that most Arkansans support what's currently going on. I just—it's hard for me to believe that.

JN: Well, I don't think you could live with—there if you believed that the vast majority felt that way.

SL: Right.

JN: I find that, to me, it appears like the height of hypocrisy when you pour it into the Christian church or you use Christianity or some view of Christianity to justify . . .

SL: Exactly.

JN: . . . that kind of legislation. But again, I don't think, probably, if they—I guess I always worried that to me—and I'm talking pretty frankly, but I don't have to run for office in Arkansas, and I may or may not choose to be buried there, depending on my mood at the time I go. The instructions vary frequently. But I think there's a pride in ignorance.

SL: Ugh.

JN: That is appalling to me.

SL: Yeah.

[00:49:46] JN: And I'm not saying there haven't been Rhodes Scholars from Arkansas. There have been brilliant people. There are brilliant people. I wonder now, though, what are we making the priority of education? And let's assume one is Christian. What kind of values? I don't know—and I was raised in a Southern Baptist Home. It's not like I've never read a Bible. I may be considered an agnostic or heathen or whatever, but what justification do we really have for this kind of attitude toward anyone?

SL: Well, I don't think you can find it in the Bible.

JN: Well, I don't, either.

SL: Or at least in the New Testament, anyway.

JN: But I rarely talk about it because I'm not a religious scholar.

SL: Right.

[00:50:36] JN: I'm not traditional, perhaps, and I'm sensitive to other people and their right to believe and believe differently from me. Because I was a Fulbright scholar and I was in philosophy and I did know and studied Hinduism and know something of the major religions, I tend to take a view that—friends who are perfectly well-meaning and Christian would say, "But you've got to accept Christ. You can't be interested in all this other." I simply can't do it. If you tell me that all the Jews, all the nonbelievers, all the Hindus, all the people who are followers of Mohammed and Muslim, everyone else is going to hell, and there is only eternity with this one group, I kind of opt out of that living in the hereafter arrangement. I just can't bring myself to accept that. I realize people of good faith may disagree with me.

SL: Right.

JN: And that's fine. Don't inflict on me a view of knowledge. Allow me to believe or think and act as I do, because I think I'm an ethical person. I think I care very much about looking for truth. And as you evolve in age, your perceptions do change somewhat. But don't overpower us, I think, with false—you want to say false prophets, or I do. But that sounds a little

pompous.

[00:52:22] SL: [*Sighs*] It's just—I—it's hard for me to imagine how it got so twisted up with religion, how it became a Christian thing to do all these horrible things that are not—they're not part of the book. They're not part of any of the preachings from Jesus or for that matter anyone else that I'm aware of that you should be doing this to people. Now I know that there's some Sharia law that is really horrible for women [*JN coughs*] and all that, but the fanaticism, the far end of using religion as some kind of tool to further something that isn't the intent, you know, I guess is what I'm trying to . . .

JN: Well, I think you and I are both inquisitive as to—you have a right to believe what you want until. And then that's the question. Until what? Until you impair other people's rights, for example.

SL: Exactly.

JN: Until you endanger the health of people. I think a lot of this comes out of the fact of segregation and being from a state that was one of the states of the Confederacy. I think it comes out of a perception of ancestors tha—and a perception of not liking that we lost the Civil

War . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . that warped our ability to be insightful. [00:54:04] Now in the Monticello Oakland Cemetery, there is a Confederate statue. I love that Confederate statue. That's mine in a way. I don't remember when it was on the square, but it's now on private property, or I think the Oakland Cemetery is privately owned. I never go to Monticello I don't first stop at the cemetery, and I leave Monticello, and I stop. And there are a lot of people who I value, and that's where they are now in—you know, the ritual of death in the South is somewhat different, although the grief is the same universally. But we go through these rituals, and I certainly value that statue. And of course, scrawled on it is "Lest we forget." When I wrote my first little short story or something, it was entitled *Lest We Forget*. So I suppose from the most cognitive youth I had—a period when I could be cognitive, I've always wrestled with the past. And as O'Neill would say in the preface to *Cat on a*—to *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, I came to the conclusion the past is the present and the future, too. And I think that's true in drumbeats now. But I don't know what we're learning from the past anymore. Just my example about the blood law in Arkansas is one thing. Now the current debate—and I don't—I sub—I actually am a subscriber to

the *Democrat Gazette*, and I don't know if I read it to get my blood pressure up or down. [*SL laughs*] But I do read it almost daily, but not in great depth. It's harder to read than havin' that paper and your coffee and crinkling it up and throwing it in the trash if you prefer that. [*SL laughs*] But I do find that I'm worried about where do we go from here. Because the—and I don't know, and you know a lot more, I'm sure, than I do. I am sympathetic with young African American students. But the more I think about the taking down, for example, in Richmond, of all the monuments—except Robert E. Lee. He isn't gone yet. I could be wrong, but I think that cost of removing the generals and the Confederates from Monument Avenue cost 1.8—187 m—over a million. I think money could perhaps be better spent in learning from the past of—doing something besides removing these. But if it's lawfully done, so be it.

SL: Right.

[00:57:05] JN: But the idea, which I gather some committee has sent for further review, of removing the Fulbright statue and the name Fulbright from I guess it's the School of Arts and Sciences . . .

SL: The biggest college . . .

JL: . . . is very upsetting to me. But if you—if you're going to do

those things, learn a little more. If you're going to say that J. William Fulbright should not be acknowledged on the campus of the University of Arkansas or any campus or any public land controlled by the state of Arkansas, what about those who served with him?

SL: Exactly.

[00:57:48] JN: My father being one of them. Every single member of the Arkansas congressional delegation signed the Southern Manifesto. Does that mean that the fact that—people from Arkansas, which they're not just bundled [*unclear word*] national and internationally well-known or admired. You may know about Central High and the integration and things and who Faubus is, but there're very few people who've had the impact that the Fulbright-Hays Act had and that J. William Fulbright had. He was roundly respected as a respected member of the US Senate. But John McClellan signed that Southern Manifesto. My father did. Took Downings did. Oren Harris did. Jim Trimble did. They all signed. And whether you like it or not, the two Southerners who refused to sign were, in fact, Albert Gore's father, Albert Gore Sr., and he was defeated in Tennessee for the Senate, and Charles Weltner in Georgia in the House, and he was defeated. And there may have been others. Why don't you

just say, let's take from *x* years to *x* years the whole Arkansas delegation. Just say none of 'em can be remembered.

SL: Or honored.

JN: Or honored.

SL: Or stand for anything else.

JN: Because it's so illogical.

SL: Yeah.

JN: In my mind. Now do I think that's a—am I going to fight about it? I'd rather fight about getting more money to fund research. I'd rather see schools improve. Arkansas and Mississippi seem to vie to be at the bottom sometimes of the cesspool of how low you can go on educational funding, et cetera.

SL: Right.

[00:59:44] JN: The University of Arkansas has many great graduates and all. I didn't go there, so I'm not torn up because it's the University of Arkansas any more than I'm torn up totally when the football team can't win any more. But I do think we need to think, "What can we do that honors the demands of the groups now, like the African-American students in—at the university or whoever is calling for the removal. But what can we do that's more constructive than tearing down the Fulbright statue or moving it to a mausoleum someplace and renaming a

school that is admired in part because of the contribution of Fulbright and others who admired Fulbright?"

SL: You know, for how long have we had Fulbright College? I mean, as long as I can remember it's been Fulbright College. I don't see what it solves by removing—by dismantling the name Fulbright out of Arkansas history. Or McClellan, or any of those that signed that Southern Manifesto. It was a different time, and there was so much else.

[01:01:09] JN: But how do we—you say you sen—it's easy enough. I can imagine being in my twenties, being African American, and with many grievances I've never been able to articulate.

SL: Right.

JN: I mean, that you don't expect me or you to understand or our age group, but I can understand a lot of it. Except you could do so much more. But at least know what the hell you're talking about. I was supposed not to swear, so . . .

SL: That's all right. That's okay.

JN: . . . I've already violated one of the Ten Commandments of my friends.

SL: [*Laughs*] It's all right.

JN: But it's absolutely essential. I think we go forward, not backward.

SL: Exactly.

JN: And we go forward, in a sense, together. Now I have African American friends. And when I was considering buying this property, Cardiss Collins, who was then a member of Congress from Illinois, came here, as did **Janis Griffin**, whose parents were from Hope, Arkansas. And they were both people I'm close to. They're close friends of mine. And they drove around Lunenburg County, and they se—and I had said to the realtor, "I can't be here if there's any chance there would be embarrassment if I go in a restaurant with friends who are African American or that I'm not safe having them—and they're not safe—visit me in my home, et cetera." And both Kardis and **Janis**, who didn't think I'd found Utopia—but they both said, "Absolutely, it's okay." Kardis is deceased now. **Janis** is still living. And I think they were right. Would that have happened in Arkansas? I like to think it could've. But I don't know that it could.

[01:03:08] SL: Yeah. Pate was relating some history to this county. Apparently when the desegregation came about, they refused to desegregate, so they just shut down all the public schools in the county and started a white academy.

JN: You mean Prince Edward County, right?

SL: Prince Edward County.

JN: Prince Edward County is . . .

SL: It's next door.

JN: . . . harmful. Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Okay.

JN: And they did. And I later at one point worked for governor—former governor, and he's still living—Linwood Holton. And Linwood Holton, who's a Republican but a very liberal Republican, actually walked his daughter into one of the schools at Richmond. And it's interesting because there were all the fights here, but for the cradle of the Confederacy, in many ways, I think Virginia may have about—advanced a tad more. I'm not—it's hard to be relative about bigotry.

SL: Right.

[01:04:12] JN: Bigotry is bigotry, whether it's in New England . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . in Boston, or it's in Little Rock, or it's in Richmond. I'm merely saying I don't think I'll live long enough—I'm sure I won't. But I cannot understand why we can't get to the point we create things rather than trying to destroy. Whether it's the symbol—what if—you know, I'm sure if you were in the service in the First World War or the Second, you know, it took a while—

and I think—wasn't it Truman who integrated the armed forces?

SL: That sounds correct.

JN: But it was a tough thing. And these are people who are fighting and dying and may be in the same foxhole and all. We progressed, but we seem to go forward and then back. And with Arkansas—actually, I was miserable at the thought of Orval Faubus being an honorary pallbearer at my mother's funeral, or father's to be exact. Actually, Orval Faubus is—can or could be a pretty charming person. I was amazed that I couldn't get mad at him and hate him when I was with Orval Faubus. [*SL laughs*] And yet I hated to admit to mother . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . that, "Oh, he's okay one on one or whatever." So I think if we could just get to that point where the person you disagree with the most can eat with you. [01:05:46] When I went to Ohio Wesleyan University as a freshman and was in a dining hall, and I sat by chance next to another student who was, in fact—I found out later was the granddaughter of Booker T. Washington. That was probably the first time in my life—and I was in Ohio—that I sat next to an African American student in that kind of mix, in a social mix that wasn't arranged for some reason, you know. And you know, I learned a lot in Ohio. I learned that the

South is not the center of bigotry. Boston, Massachusetts, can teach you that in a hot second.

SL: Yes.

JN: So you can't hate the South. And in a Faulkner-like way, I don't hate it but—and I love it. It's very much like Monticello. And I think I'm heavily influenced by William Faulkner. But you see progress. You know in your own life you've made friendships. [01:07:00] When I was in college, every now and then I'd be in a situation where you'd be walking across campus—I had a car, but you'd be walking across campus with the man who was head of Beta Sigma Tau, which was an interracial fraternity. I'm not—I joined a sorority, but I'm not really into all that. I thought it was a certain degree of nonsense. But Arkansas friends, you know, the Alpha Kappa Chi Omegas at the University of Arkansas, and oh, Pi Phi.

SL: Right.

JN: And Zeta Tau Alpha. I actually thought it was all a lot of nonsense. But I joined and have not been active since. But as I would—I would think, "Oh my God, what if anyone sees me?" in these social situations that were normal campus activity. Ohio Wesleyan had the highest affiliation with Greek—the Greeks of any college or university in the country. Now I'm not saying that

'cause I was proud of that, but I'm just saying you kind of joined as if you would join a newspaper so you'd know what was going on. I thought Ohio Wesleyan had pitiful football teams. They called them Babbling Bishops.

[01:08:23] SL: Oh, so that's the Methodist school, is that right?

JN: It is and—it was. Norman Vincent Peale was the big star there.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JN: And actually, Maggie Peale was a Pi Phi there and was a class or so ahead of me. But for me, it wasn't a bad choice. My family, when they drove me from Arkansas to go to Ohio Wesleyan took one look—Delaware, Ohio, is not a beautiful setting. It's an industrial city.

SL: Ah.

JN: You walk through the pool halls and all to get from the women's dorm to the main campus. [*SL laughs*] My father, I don't think, ever was sure what philosophy was. He just kept saying, "Judy, does it bake any bread?" 'Cause he was sure I'd be penniless the rest of my life with a college degree that was useless. But when they drove away, they said, "Now if you want to, just called Duke and just said, "Oh, I'm coming there." But it was kind of intriguing to me that no matter where I went, if you wanna find bigotry, it's there.

SL: Yeah.

JN: It was not uniquely Southern.

[01:09:41] SL: So we've kinda skipped over a big section of your early life.

JN: Okay, go back to it.

SL: Yeah, so . . .

JN: I'll see if I can remember it.

SL: So let's talk about what your interests were in the elementary school years. Were you already headed toward being a tomboy at that time?

JN: Oh, I was a tomboy.

SL: Yeah.

JN: I went to both—well, when we—I went to Beauvoir, which is the coed through the third grade part of the Washington National Cathedral.

SL: Okay.

JN: And I went there and, you know, we—I played touch football. I was good. I was a good football player, actually, until you find out you've got impediments [*SL laughs*] in your chest. But and I loved softball. I love baseball. But I was a jock, so to speak. But then I went on to the National Cathedral School for Girls and was there in the fourth grade and the fifth grade. I came home

one day, and Mother's mother, my grandmother, was home, and I said I'd been to communion. Now communion at the Washington National Cathedral is pretty special because you're—at least if you were in the school—and St. Albans was the boys school. The music was beautiful. And you're in those stalls, and it's dignified.

SL: Yeah.

[01:11:12] JN: And so she shrieked at Mother, "Catherine, if you don't do something, she's gonna become a little Episcopalian." [*SL laughs*] And that has affected me dramatically. I've never forgotten it. It's one reason I don't think anyone—and I think it affected me because they took me out rather than hear her. I would have, too, probably. They took me out of that school system. Now you're a kid. You're in the fifth grade. You like your school, you like your friends. And they put me in a very good school, Holton-Arms. And it's a girls' school in Washington, now in Bethesda, Maryland. And I got a great education, and they sacrificed to pay for it. And I'm very grateful. And I still have friends that—I graduated in [19]53. There are few of us still close friends, and their children, many of them, are close to me. So I didn't suffer educationally. But I have never forgotten the arrogance of someone saying what a horrible thing it'd be if I

turned into a little Episcopalian. Now I'm not an Episcopalian, but if I were—felt the necessity to join, I like the Episcopal Church. I respect the Book of Common Prayer.

SL: Yep.

JN: I respect, for example, what the Trinity Church has done, which I know about because of Chester Johnson. And he's from Monticello, but he's my junior. It's odd to me that both of us came out of the Drew County environment, vastly different social backgrounds, but we've been influenced in some ways in very similar ways.

[01:13:00] SL: You all's paths went through all the segregation, the racism, and the—somehow or another, y'all made it through that path and are brighter for it somehow or another, you're more rounded. You—I mean, he actually taught at an all-Black school.

JN: I know he did.

SL: And so how remarkable is that?

JN: Well, everything I think—I actually read his book.

SL: Yeah, sure.

JN: And it was sort of like—I was in Cohasset, Massachusetts, with a friend, now deceased, Margaret Williamson, who was one of the Williamsons of Monticello. And I remember finishing one of the Southern novels, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

SL: Okay.

[01:14:00] JN: And I was silent. And she was married to an ex-naval officer who rang a bell. It was like something from the movies. And all of us were supposed to—we're grown people—trot and eat when the captain said, "We're gonna eat now." And I had tears in my eyes. And Margaret Williamson, who grew up and went to high school in margre—in Monticello and then to Agnes Scott and all, but very learned family. She said, "What's wrong?" And I said, "I just read a book that speaks beyond words of everything we are." And the next thing I read that had that much punch was Chester Johnson's book.

SL: Yeah.

JN: Why? I knew every street. I know. I can see the Methodist church three doors up.

SL: Of course.

JN: I know where Chester lived. I know the disdain of some law enforcement. I know Monticello pretty well because I've had this long love/hate with it. I called Chester, actually, to ask him if I could use his name when you were talking to me. That I didn't want—his story is his, mine is mine. I certainly didn't want to speak for Chester Johnson. And he said—we chatted, and he said, "Yes, you can—kind of carte blanche. [*SL laughs*] You can

do what you want." And I think he had a huge impact in making me realize I wasn't the only person who ever came out of Arkansas, and in particular Drew County and Monticello, who has gone through the duality of loving and hating, of trying to find meaning, wanting to make change, of being unable to live there for fear I'd have a nervous breakdown, of reading Faulkner on the front yard and my mother saying, "Could you put the dust jacket off so people won't need you're reading that book?" Now I didn't think there were enough people in Monticello, Arkansas, to care whether I was reading Faulkner or the Kama Sutra. [*SL laughs*] But be that as it is, it's good to have company.

SL: Yes.

[01:16:26] JN: And I think Chester and I have bonded, in a sense, because we can relate to the depth of both our feelings and the fact we succeeded sort of in spite of Monticello, and yet maybe because of it, too.

SL: There is that. That—and that's an interesting other side, other edge of the sword. You know, that something that's so dire and so distasteful somehow or another provided some kind of strength to both of you to . . .

[01:17:01] JN: Well, you know, it was interesting when you talked about Chester and the year he taught in Monticello in the African

American or colored school, as it would have been called then. When my mother died and I went home to arrange her funeral—and mother was a deaconess—was my father—the First Baptist Church in Monticello. Mother and Father tithed to the Baptist church as long as I knew them. But when I called and wanted to arrange what I wanted—and it was going to be on a Sunday, and they were annoyed about it being Sunday afternoon. Mother played for churches, for funerals, weddings, et cetera for as long as I knew her, almost. No one ever objected to Sunday. But then they told me, well, the choir couldn't sing if I did this and that. And so this war kind of went on. And then I sent the music. Mother was a musician. The music was more classical. And among the things I said I would like was "We Shall Overcome." Well, they practically had a nervous breakdown.

SL: [*Laughs*] I can imagine.

JN: And the reason—and I said, "But it's in the first edition"—they said, "We don't have the music. We can't do that." I said, "I wish you'd told me before I flew down here. I could have brought it." And then I said, "I'll get the music." And they said—and I said, "But I think if you pull out one of your hymnals, it's in the first edition of the First Baptist hymnal." And the reason I know that is I referred, to my mother, to the civil-rights

hymn. Mother shook her fist and said, "That is not a civil-rights hymn. That's a bap—that's in the first edition of the First Baptist hymnal." And it was. But I called a woman who had been principal for years, Sadie Johnson . . .

SL: Kay.

JN: . . . of the colored school. And I called, and I got Sadie Johnson on the phone. She said, "Oh, Judy, I'm so sorry about your mother," et cetera, and all. And she said, "I know why you're calling. You don't have the music to 'We Shall Overcome.' My grandson's bicycling it over to Marjorie Mae Ingram," who was the pianist or organist at the First Baptist Church. In the end, though, I in fact brought down people—I didn't even know there was an Arkansas opera in Little Rock. But there is [*laughs*] evidently, and was. And people came down to sing. The Baptist Church choir did not sing.

SL: Wow.

[01:19:46] JN: Now you can s—what did I learn from that? It confirmed some of the thoughts I have that are negative about the church. But I called, and I said, "You know, there's only one limousine, and it's white 'cause they use it for graduations and weddings in Monticello, Arkansas." I said, "I will get out of that. And the press will be there. Not as much as when father, who

was an incumbent member of Congress—but still, there would be some press. I'll get out of that and walk up the stairs, and I'll bring a hammer and nails, and I'll just tack up a little sign, 'Church'—in case anyone's coming to the funeral and say 'Church closed due to lack of Christianity.' And then I'll get back." Well, I'd forgotten about interment. I didn't know what I thought I was gonna do about that. But in fact, I think they actually believed—and I probably would have done it, although there would have been people trying to restrain me. And they suddenly decided, yes, we could have "We Shall Overcome." [01:21:00] We had a minister—I think they brought in a visiting minister from Little Rock. I've forgotten all those details. But it was a pretty traumatic experience. Because why? What possible difference could the singing of "We Shall Overcome" in a Christian church—that is, in fact, in the First Baptist hymnal—what possible damage—were we gonna have a race riot because the little communist from [*laughter*] Boston who went away to school is home again and rabble rousing? When we got to the—and then I think the—whoever this person was who was officiating had said to me, "I want to talk about your mother and following in your father"—it sounded like, you know, someone waifing, walking three steps behind my father for eternity.

SL: Right.

JN: And I said, "Well, you know, she was something of a feminist." And he said, "Well, what do you want?" And I said, "Well, I don't have it, but I actually like what's in the Book of Common Prayer. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

SL: Right.

JN: Now how can that offend anyone?

SL: Right.

JN: I didn't say that. And so they said, "You sound like a little Catholic or Episcopalian." And [*laughter*]—and I said—I started to say, "Well, what of it?" And I said, "Well, if I have to, I guess—you know, the grave diggers will be there at a high price. I guess I'll just talk to anyone who wants to come." Now they never let it go all that far, but I would have played that hand out, I think. But you see, I would like to think we're all beyond that now.

SL: You would think we would be.

[01:22:49] JN: Well, when you talk about Chester, I think we both have been deeply forced to go as far as we can in our depths to rec—to find out that reconciliation is really the better way for our own lifestyle, our own belief, our own freedom of belief for others. That sounds naive, but it's all true, actually.

SL: He's a remarkable guy. I've gotten to spend quite a bit of time with him and not just on the phone, but in Helena. And he was the first person—I'd never heard of the Elaine Massacre until I was interviewing him and got his story about his father's role. He certainly has changed my life. You know, I—it just tumbled and tumbled and tumbled. And I'm still in the thick of it over there. I still go to Helena two or three times a year.

[01:23:53] JN: Well, I look forward to seeing them when we—when, post-COVID, we can get together. But it's interesting because the *Advance Monticellonion*—that's the weekly paper in Monticello, Arkansas. I called and said to the editor or a woman who's there, "You realize there's someone from Monticello who's published a book?" And I told her a little about him. And I didn't know Chester particularly. I remembered him from childhood because one of his closest friends is Virgil Trotter, whose sister is Trish Trotter, who was such a huge influence on me and is part of the Trotter family of Monticello. But it was intriguing to me that she—Chester told me she called, and they did a long interview by telephone and all, and then suddenly it was cut. It's never appeared.

SL: Wow.

JN: And I think the reason may have been some of the people in

Monticello, and they could be old families, but somebody objected, and they said no, they wouldn't run anything. Now the *Democrat Gazette*, as you know, did run something.

SL: Yes.

JN: But instead—you know, I could send a recipe for some kind of biscuit with a pimento cheese ball on it, [*SL laughs*] and they could write up the whole thing.

SL: Right.

JN: And it'd get half a page. That you couldn't review that book—or even not review. That's too much of a word. That you couldn't publicize that a Monticellonian had, in fact, written a book—and I don't think he depicts Monticello unkindly. I think . . .

SL: I didn't think so.

JN: . . . he depicts it realistically.

SL: Yeah.

[01:25:43] JN: And he didn't name names. Now his publisher may have suggested because of liability, et cetera, that he not. But he didn't. But instead of taking any pride, when you—you could write a book about dog leashes, and they'd give it coverage. I n—I almost went berserk about it. And then everyone said, "Don't get excited." Well, the point is, when—at eighty-six, when do you get excited?

SL: [*Laughs*] Exactly.

JN: And when do you say, "Damn the torpedoes?"

SL: That's right.

JN: It's worth making an issue. And that's an issue of at least people should know that exists. And there's only a chapter or so about Monticello, Arkansas. It's incidental in a way. But yet I wonder if it hasn't been very formative in the activism either Chester, far more than I, or I have.

SL: I think without question that stuff affected you guys early. Maybe even before you knew it. I think—I—that's just my feeling. I feel like our paths are really set pretty well before we can remember. I think just the way that we were raised or the things that we were encouraged to do or when we were rewarded for our efforts—I think those minuscule, those tiny first steps are the path that people end up taking.

[01:27:16] JN: I think that may be right. I think it's part of the story. It's the painful part for me and how—I don't have any desire to hurt anyone in Monticello.

SL: Right.

JN: But I can't just sit there passively. I read the *Advance* mainly to see the obituaries, but I'm so old now that younger people seem to be dying. There're not too many people I even recognize.

But there's a lot that is good and has come out that's good. And the u—you've got a university there, for heaven's sakes.

SL: Yeah.

JN: There's—you could make so much of these experiences. That people wouldn't want to hear Chester, or people wouldn't want to hear me in a way—we have unique experiences. Mine is more subscribed in the sense that I was a political child. You don't want to defeat your father 'cause you're out on the table.

SL: Right.

JN: Other than supporting Fulbright, you know. [*SL laughs*] I can be guilty of some major crimes, I guess, and misdemeanors. But I think that the silencing of intellectual growth for anyone of any race by any state in this country is abhorrent. And I'll die thinking that.

SL: I don't think you're alone with that. And I think that's—I think it's evolving. I believe it's evolving to the . . .

JN: Well, that's 'cause we have to have hope or we'd commit suicide.

SL: [*Laughter*] Well, there is that.

[01:28:53] JN: Well, I mean, you can't live in French existential despair. And I wrote my honors thesis on [*laughs*] on French existentialism and the ethics. And I went to India because I was studying the ethics of the Hindu and the ethics—and Christian

ethics.

SL: So the whole deal with India and Southeast Asia, that was a Fulbright.

JN: It was. A Fulbright grant.

SL: Grant. So there you have it. I mean, where else, from what other source can compare with the Fulbright program? And how many . . .

JN: None that I know of.

SL: None. How many lives? And the belief that if people just see each other and experience each other, that all—a lot of these problems go away.

JN: Well, I think it's a grand thing. And it—you know, it's a two-way scholarship. There are people who come here with Fulbrights, et cetera. Fulbright himself, you know, I think loved his experience as a Rhodes Scholar. I think that had a lot to do with it.

SL: Yep. I agree.

[01:30:00] JN: Fulbright was to me an interesting person because, you know, so many people thought he was an egghead. He wasn't a naturally gifted politician. He was a naturally gifted thinker. But he, as you well know, had been president of the University of Arkansas. But it was Betty Fulbright who amazed me. Betty Fulbright, who was Philadelphia Main Line, dressed

impeccably in Peck and Peck tweeds or something, could crawl over a bob-wire fence and go get the farmers vote. [*SL laughs*] And it was absolutely true. Bill would be reading the *New Republic* himself in the air-conditioned car. He just couldn't crawl bob-wire fences or something. Now my father could, in a way, but Father could talk because he came out of all—well, almost abject poverty in—and was self everything. Self-taught. Self-educated. And he knew those farmers. Bill Fulbright was a more—a higher educational level, perhaps. He didn't communicate the same way, but he did because he created opportunities and wanted them for people to learn. And I think he's always been shortchanged 'cause it was easy to make fun of Bill Fulbright, and a lot of the cartoons in the *Democrat* and *Gazette* . . .

SL: Oh.

JN: . . . used to. And I—and you—sometimes you did wonder where his mind was. How would you not know the mayor of so-and-so or the state senator from this county or that was there? But he'd be thinking. He really was a thinker. Betty was the one who really understood people.

SL: Where the rubber met the road.

[01:32:03] JN: And I remember calling Betty Fulbright when I

marched in the Martin Luther King March or the so-called March of mar—where—Martin Luther King's. And I was in law school. A friend of mine went with me, who later—and has just retired in the last few years from the Supreme Court of California—and Kay Werdegar, who grew up in California. Blond, blue-eyed, first in her class at Boalt, the University of California at Boalt. First in our class when—and I was sort of dragging around. I thought law school was dull and didn't know quite why I was fooling with it. And I'd just come back from India and philosophy. But we stepped off at All Souls Unitarian at 18th and Columbia Road to march. Now Mother was then deputy assistant secretary of state and a Johnson appointee to that. So for once, I didn't have a parent in congress, but Mother was worried. But would there be violence? Would we be all right? As a matter of fact, it was one of the most peaceful, inspiring things I've ever done or that Kay has ever done. And Kay—California, when their judges, their chee—Supreme Court judges retire, does a whole series of interviews. And Kay had said to the woman who was interviewing her, "Call Judy. Judy is so much better at remembering [*SL laughs*] every detail." And that's true. And so now part of my memory is merged with hers in something no one will ever read or hear, probably, but we did it. But it was

interesting because once you do that kind of thing, in spite of the fact you knew lots of people wouldn't understand more than wouldn't approve, you can't go back. Or I couldn't.

SL: Right.

[01:34:14] JN: It was clear to me that we had to have reconciliation. And the South that my father envisioned and I think the politicians I knew from Arkansas—and this goes back to David Terry and some of the ones that were senior to father, but who were distinguished, or my family thought and I always thought were distinguished—you wanted progress for Arkansas. You wanted better schools. You wanted more industry. You—like the Pine Bluff Arsenal made a huge difference.

SL: Oh, yeah.

JN: So everything that I think Arkansas needs and needed, and a lot of it's come true, is hinged in part on education. And on making a climate where people can ascend from pretty humble beginnings and treating people with equality. Now I think it's improved in my lifetime. And I think it's improved 'cause in part people like Lottie Shackelford, first woman to be mayor of Little Rock, first African American woman in—served in both the Clinton and the Obama administrations—lobbied in Washington. People like that make people see bridges. And she does it with a

soft, lilting voice and a rich, deep laugh.

SL: I love that.

[01:35:54] JN: I've never seen Lottie lose her temper. I have seen us in Little Rock with friends of mine who I call anything but liberal on any social issue. But they all say, "Oh, we'll meet you at Trio's or whatever" . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . "and have lunch." And Lottie is like a soothing water. And she's constant. She has a constancy. She has a, I think, religious faith. She has children she's certainly close to. I called her on her birthday recently, and she was in Atlanta for her granddaughter's wedding. But you see, Lottie—people like that, the fact you can have one friend, real friend in the deepest sense, the sense that says one's real wealth is in one's friend—you can have—if you've got one friend in Arkansas who can be constructive in the middle of the madness—and Lottie is one of those people.

SL: Wow. I've gotta line her up.

JN: I wouldn't lobby you, would I?

SL: [*Laughs*] Oh, no, not at all.

[Recording stopped]

[01:37:13] SL: All right, Judy. We just had lunch.

JN: [*Laughs*] Yes.

SL: And you know, we're trying to split this interview between myself and David Pryor Jr. So I feel—I don't feel like we covered your teenage years and all the changes that teenagers go through and all the trauma that teenagers go through. And for you, you were in two different worlds. Back home in your Arkansas home in the summers, but in DC through the school year so . . .

JN: What was it like?

SL: We—tell me about your teenage years, your cultural . . .

JN: Well . . .

SL: . . . experiences.

[01:38:05] JN: I think they were—in some ways it's probably narrow. In other ways, it's pretty broad. I went to Holton-Arms School, which is a girls' school, then located at 2125 S Street NW.

SL: Okay.

JN: Right in the city. But I was a day student when my parents were in town and took a bus and could go by myself and go to Holton-Arms. When they were gone, I could either be a boarding student, or I sometimes stayed with friends, depending on how long until Congress adjourned or whatever. But basically

Holton-Arms, although at the time I sort of made fun of it, was probably one of the best things that ever happened to me because it taught you a certain discipline. And I was exposed to people from all over the country. Some were congressional children and had fathers who were in the House or Senate. Many were from parents whose wealth derived other than Washington, DC, 'cause as you know, there's precious little industry there. Many of their parents were doctors or lawyers, too. But we were a more affluent and privileged group that you couldn't compare to Monticello and who my friends were in Monticello, although arguably you could say, again, they were the children of the lawyers or the doctors or what have you. Holton did teach me to read and write correctly. And I will always be grateful for some of the people who taught me that.

SL: Ah, do you have a favorite . . .

[01:39:54] JN: Because when I went to college, I thought freshman English was a breeze. I knew how to write an essay or to research and write a research paper. So in terms of basic skills, it was a very good school. In terms of social skills, it probably was in ways that I thought were nonsensical. You did not eat chicken with your hands at Holton-Arms. So you learned [*laughs*] how to cut that or to eat a lobster without throwing it

all over your front. You also learned—like Jane Hadley was the vice president's daughter. She was a class ahead of me. And Alben Barkley was the vice president. So you learned from children whose parents were elevated through politics to higher offices. You learned from children who actually had governesses and whose parents had wealth and chauffeured cars and all, but they had no one to tuck 'em in at night. I mean, Mother would refer at times to some of my friends as those poor little rich girls [*SL laughs*] because they didn't have the same richness, in her view and in part in mine, that others did. But then it was wonderful if you had a chauffeur to drive you to basketball . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JN: . . . or to whatever at Holton-Arms. So I think I was fortunate overall. I was popular at Holton-Arms, but I was kind of—again, I was the—I was kind of the hillbilly from Arkansas.

SL: Good. [*Laughs*]

[01:41:41] JN: And I was president of my class, as I recall, senior year. But I didn't care one hoot about midshipman's dance class, which was the socially elite class that people went to. It was coed at Holton. I didn't really care about dating the midshipmen at the Naval Academy. My interest was still exploring all sorts of things. But when I got the opportunity, and

it wasn't till 1953, and I graduated in [19]53—think it was [19]53—that—when I had the chance to go to Europe, for the first time I didn't want to go home to the dogs and the horses. And I loved going to Europe with the group of Californians on an art tour.

SL: Wow.

JN: And seeing London. Going to art galleries. Meeting artists. I mean, I was just floored with the world that was beyond the United States and remained that way the rest of my life. When I—so Holton got me where I wanted to go. Holton got my family off the problem of what on earth I might do in Monticello. [*SL laughs*] You know. And this [*laughs*]—my father would say, "Honey," when I'd come to Arkansas, "could you keep your mouth quietly shut in seven different languages?" So for them, it was kind of a relief, too.

SL: Right.

[01:43:20] JN: You didn't have to worry about someone asking, 'How's your son?" because there were twenty-two pairs of blue jeans hanging on the line or whatever.

SL: Right.

JN: Or I was giving an oration on Plato that no one cared about. So in that sense, I was popularly social, but I was probably very

late as far as caring one hoot about dating or any of that. That all seemed boring to me, you know.

SL: So the whole dating thing didn't start . . .

JN: Well, at Holton-Arms, you were much more circumscribed.

SL: Right.

JN: And you can't—but I never—I wasn't very interested. That came much later in my life.

SL: Okay.

JN: And wasn't paramount. I didn't feel I was a failure if I weren't pinned. Pinned meaning . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . Naval Academy or . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . West Point. If—you know, some of my friends were dying to just get pinned to a midshipman. I couldn't think of anything exciting about that in the vaguest memory. [01:44:23] So but I—you could go to the Symphony, you could go to the theater, you could go to the Folger Shakespearean Library. There were so many opportunities, and you began to perceive how little you did know, which is hard 'cause, you know, when you're young, you think you know everything.

SL: Right.

JN: But doors opened to me. Friends of mine from Holton—some were the children of ambassadors, et cetera. Some were children of great wealth. Some were other politicians' children. But you went to visit elsewhere. So I began to see there was a world outside of Monticello, Arkansas. Also began to see that Monticello wasn't all I wanted in life. That I'm—it was great to have the dogs and the horses and all the things you liked, but it was also great to be able to find new places and experiences.

SL: So did you halfway maintain any kind of relationships back in Monticello . . .

JN: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . of your age group?

[01:45:35] JN: Yeah, Mary Lou—the one who—you're welcome to call her if you [*laughs*] are so inclined. Mary Louise Towler *T-O-W-L-E-R* Rae, whose father was the sheriff, was and remains a very close friend of mine. And Mary Louise or people from Arkansas would come visit. And then I'd do a lot with constituents. Once I had a driver's license, I could take you and show you the Lincoln Memorial.

SL: Right.

JN: Or the Jefferson or the Washington Monument. And so I would do that. I would go to those damn DAR little teas or something

and, you know, dress up and have little white gloves and say to people how wonderful it was from Pine Bluff or wherever they were from.

SL: Right.

JN: So I always was involved somewhat in Arkansas and the office and people who came and went from Arkansas to Washington.

SL: So over the phone you described some of your activity as a child in the Capitol building. It sounded like you kinda had the run . . .

JN: Oh, that was heaven on earth.

SL: Tell . . .

JN: I had . . .

SL: Talk to me about that.

[01:46:49] JN: Well, I could get—my father was in Longworth to begin with on the seventh floor, I think. And I could ride down, get on the elevator, go through, and ride my tricycle from his office to the Capitol. [*SL laughs*] And did. And so that was the most fun. And of course, the cops knew you at all the—so I'd get on the elevator on the seventh floor. As I recall that was the top floor. I drive—I'd ride down on my tricycle, get off my tricycle, go through the subway. And then they didn't have the cars then, you know, the motorized cars.

SL: Right. Golf carts.

JN: And I'd get on the member's elevator and ask for the floor. And I'd get off, and I drive up and find a doorkeeper and say, "Will you t"—and they say, "We'll tell your dad you're here." So in that sense, I am—I almost grew up playing in the Capitol.

SL: It's kind of like you owned the place.

JN: Well, I loved it. You know, everyone knew you. It was fun. And then my family was very inclusive. When MacArthur, for example, spoke and came back—and I was mad at Truman for treating MacArthur badly.

SL: Right.

[01:48:13] JN: For any number of events, members of Congress, until a child is twelve, could bring you on the floor with them. So I remember vividly, for example, when Pearl Harbor occurred. On Sundays, we would go to church, maybe out to eat. And members of Congress then, and probably now, got mail delivery over the weekend. So we'd stop by the office, and father loved to go through all this mail. And I would be bored and, "Why—how long we gonna do this and stay?" And then we would go home. And I remember being where the old War Department was and hearing the announcement the Japanese had attacked Pearl harbor. And of course, immediately we knew

there'd be a special session. You know, a lot started falling in place. But when war was declared, I was there. I don't remember for sure—I might have been sitting in my father's seat with him. If not, I had a step-seat in the gallery.

SL: A step-seat.

JN: Well, they . . .

SL: On the stairs between rows.

JN: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JN: Meaning Mother would have had the more comfortable seat.

SL: Right.

JN: I think I was on the floor with him. But I don't want to be absolutely certain. But I've never forgotten the seriousness of being there as the votes—and I think Jeannette Rankin was the only no. I may be wrong about that too. But it was a monumental thing. So in a sense, my family went out of the way to share anything historical or they thought I could learn from with me.

[01:50:02] SL: Did you have any encounters with the president, Roosevelt?

JN: Yeah. I—until the last president, who I didn't care to meet, nor did he care to meet me probably, but I think I had met every

president. And actually, you know, that was fun, too. And then—because you admire them and know them. And I certainly met once or twice, at least, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. And I've been to parties where Eleanor Roosevelt was.

SL: Wow.

JN: I was pretty well exposed, because if you're an only child and you can act well enough that you're not going to ruin someone's tea party, cocktail party, or what have you, they'd ask if they can bring me along. And usually the answer was yes.

SL: That's great parenting, isn't it?

JN: Hmm?

SL: That's great parenting that they would ask if they could bring their child with them to the event.

JN: Well, I think they—I think my father particularly wanted to share it. Remember, here was a country boy, and Mother was more sophisticated, better educated and all. But they wanted—and I think this is true of most parents. They wanted more for me, and they sacrificed to make sure they thought they gave me everything they could.

[01:51:37] SL: Okay. So now you're—you said a little bit earlier that you never really got serious about the dating thing until much later.

JN: That's right.

SL: So what . . .

JN: I was in law school before I thought a bit—and I did date some. I never was into it with a passion. You know, I have friends who nothing . . .

SL: Mattered more.

JN: . . . they wanted more than to marry and have children and . . .

SL: Right.

JN: . . . belong to this country club or whatever. I don't mean they're trivial. They certainly weren't. But it didn't interest me. In law school, there was someone who was from Maine, which I considered as backward as Arkansas in many ways. [*SL laughs*] And I did. I was very involved in that. And I didn't marry him, but we were certainly involved. And that was the first time. And it came kind of as a shock to me how involved you can get.

SL: Right.

[01:52:35] JN: And then I did marry briefly someone who had been in India, although he was on a Ford Grant, not a Fulbright. And it was sort of one of those things where you do what you think intellectually and little out of curiosity. And it—the marriage didn't work. But it probably—it was probably both of us intellectualizing too much. And when—and I say when I

terminated the marriage. People say, "Judy, it sounds like you threw him down the disposal." [*SL laughs*] But I don't know why, I just always [*laughs*] say when I terminated—and he was certainly brilliant. He's a professor. He's dead now. And I didn't wanna—he taught at the University of Hawaii. I didn't wanna be at the University of Hawaii. Our interests were different. We weren't antagonistic, but we were certainly far from, in hindsight, from compatible. And that kind of—by then I was on to other things.

SL: Right.

JN: So I never have been terribly involved except in probably those two relationships. I don't regret it, but I've also been lucky, really fortunate—friends of mine who did have children and had varying degrees of success with marriages have always shared with me. So even now, among my best friends are the children of many of my Holton classmates. And I'm very close to a lot of young people.

SL: So it's a family.

JN: It's a pretty good trade off [*laughs*], really.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JN: Without any . . .

SL: Right.

JN: Without any diapers or anything.

SL: Right, right. Well, okay. I feel like we should get me out of this chair and put Dee Pryor in this chair 'cause I can't wait . . .

JN: The kid.

SL: The kid. Yeah. Let's get the kid in.

JN: You know, to me, he's a kid.

SL: Well, you know.

JN: Well, we've known each other a long time.

Lindsay Stone: I'm gonna pause.

[Recording stopped]

[01:54:44] David Pryor Jr.: Are you ready?

SL: Yeah, we're rollin'.

DP: Oh. Okay, great. Well, let me, if I could, Judy, thank you for doing this. This is fantastic. I want to introduce my voice to those who might see or listen to this later. But I am David Pryor Jr. And my father was also in Arkansas politics, and my brother. And you and I met a long time ago in Washington, DC. Nineteen—in fact, I think it was over thirty years ago, late [19]90—or early [19]90s, probably around the time of the Bill Clinton campaign. And I have lots of great memories of Judy Norrell and very influential memories. And I'll share some of the—some of those along the way. But what we wanted to do

was have Scott cover the early part of your life. And I thought I would step in and go over some of the later part of your life where you worked in Washington, DC, as a lobbyist in the insurance industry. I would love to get into art and why it is so important to you. And I wanna talk about, you know, some other things that you and I have talked about along the way.

[01:56:10] JN: Okay. And remember, it wasn't just the insurance industry.

DP: Of course not. It was . . .

JN: It was the League of Women Voters and . . .

DP: Yes.

JN: . . . Title IX. You know, just so . . .

DP: Of course.

JN: I don't wanna just look like I was one-industry dog. [*Laughter*]

DP: You're allowed. So we did a lot of work together in politics.

JN: And fundraising.

DP: And fundraising. And I believe you and I started on the Bill Clinton campaign. And I—as we were having lunch outside on your beautiful deck outside, we talked a little bit about you running some campaigns for your family. And I know that had a big impact in your life, and perhaps it put you on the trajectory to actually get to Washington, DC. Do you have any memory—

can you talk a little bit more about how campaigns perhaps shaped your career in Washington?

[01:57:11] JN: Well, I think—you know, for a long time, my father ran unopposed. And so at the point I became involved, you had some health issues on his part. And also you delegated more to me because I could write. Now you'll find this amusing. The first speech I wrote for him—and this, remember, is before TV and scripts and things you could read—I had him at the end say, "As Shakespeare said, 'To thine own self be true,'" and whatever. The next day, some old geezer came up to me and said, "Gal, I know you wrote that speech for your father." And I said, "Oh, no." And he said, "Listen, he might quote Shakespeare, but he wouldn't tell you he was." [*Laughter*] And so I kind of learned that way how to talk in a different idiom, that this wasn't for dissertation, and no one was going to do a thing to me if I didn't document every quote or anything I used. But as you did that, you got better because TV had begun to be a source. You got to the point that you could, for him, bullet issues. And remember, if you're not physically well, but you're acting like you're healthy as Charles Atlas, you need to be able to pinpoint. And so you talk about soil conservation. You talk about soybean allotments. You don't talk about tobacco

allotments, which you would if you were running a campaign in those days from Virginia. You worry about cotton. You worry about floods. You act like you know a lot more than you do about timber. You try to make the programs that you do substantially support—and you're a Democrat, but a Southern Democrat. There was all the difference in the world in being a Democrat and a Southern Democrat in those days. My father was a Southern Democrat, and although he had a sense of how people stood—you—before you—we didn't have a huge Italian or Chinese population, but we had them. Lake—around Lake Village, et cetera, there was an Asian population. There was an Italian population in parts of the district. There was the whole industry that surrounded duck hunting, et cetera, in Stuttgart. [01:59:56] So I became the one who could at least associate local issues when we were in local places with—that made people think he cared about what they cared about because they didn't give a rat's ass about some of the programs. They also didn't all like FDR and the New Deal programs, but they cared a lot about the river being navigable. They cared—and he was pretty gifted. And when I referred earlier to the fact there was a comity between members of Congress and the Arkansas delegation. People scratched each other's back to get something. So if you

represented Little Rock but you needed someone on appropriations, my father'd damn well try to help you. But putting all that together in a more modern context of campaigning I guess fell to me. And I loved doing it.

DP: Well, I must say, you had a great reputation in Washington, DC, and were just one of those lobbyists that knew it from A to Z, whether it was the issues or the people or how to get it done or the process.

[02:01:14] JN: I think my greatest gift, though, was that I respected members of Congress. I didn't lie consciously to them. I made sure our fact sheets weren't a lot of malarkey, or tried to. And you had to always overcome suspicion. And even now, Dick Shelby is retiring this year from the Senate. You may think we're strange birds, but he carried an issue, H.R. 100, the opposition to it, which the insurance and the Business Roundtable both opposed. And I hated the issue because I actually personally would—was on the other side, but I didn't let—I would've either resigned or something. But Dick Shelby was our champion on the House side. To this day if I see him in the airport somewhere, people just think it's amazing that we're so fond of each other. And I'm really sad to see him leave the Senate. But you don't forge those without good faith.

[02:02:25] DP: Well, Judy, I've looked at your career. I've read your bios recently and some news articles. And it seems to me that perhaps your parents' life in politics and your background led you to become more of a public service lobbyist, if you know what I mean. Some of the lobbyists that we know are in it for the money.

JN: Or pure greed.

DP: Well, [*laughs*] you said it, not me. [*JN laughs*] But I would ask to you—for you to reflect on some of your more favorite lobbying campaigns or clients where you felt like you were doing just really good stuff.

[02:03:10] JN: Well, one—probably foremost, and it shocked people at some party for me that I had such a big hand in Title IX. But I was then representing the League of Women Voters, and the Business and Professional Women, the American Association of University Professors. A group tried to get equal treatment and equal funding of sports for women. It sounds kind of harmless, benign. Well, to the Pennsylvania state football coach, it didn't. You know, no one wanted to give up men's sports and the funding and amounts that went to them. So we were sort of a straggly group of women trying to get something passed that many people thought wasn't an issue. And we were fighting big

names in college athletics. Now I knew more than many people did about college sports. But you had to—we'd get up at dawn and be in the Longworth Cafeteria or the Rayburn Cafeteria or the Senate, although the Senate is a little different kind of thing to crack. And we'd bird dog. And I'd say, "There's so-and-so from Pennsylvania." And you know, what're they gonna do? These [*laughs*] annoying bees arrive at your table with your coffee and, "Oh, we want you to help us." Well, I'd bring in nuns and—by the busload. [*Laughter*] And but I wasn't the only one. But it was probably the most exciting victory when we finally prevailed because we were people no one knew very well. We didn't have an organized kind of financial backing, et cetera. We were do-gooders. This is long before feminism was as well known, but we were dogged. And I will say most members of Congress, and most were male, didn't wanna be seen harassing some poor little girl. You know, "Oh, we don't want 'em crying or something." But we won that. That was by far the mo—and you now still are reading about Title IX and the manifestations of it and whether—and Stanford is currently being sued because of violations, allegedly, of Title IX. That was singly the most fun because we started way, way back. We were on the one-yard line, and it was a long road. [02:05:50] Now the irony—you'll

be amused by this. I can remember bird dogging Dale Bumpers, for example. I cannot remember how anyone in the Arkansas delegation voted. And I think that's what Betty Fulbright would call selective amnesia. [*DP laughs*] You didn't want to [*laughs*] ever be able, every time you saw 'em, to think, "Oh, you voted wrong, and I'm mad at you," because you need them more than they need you. But of victories, that was just an upset and a great one.

DP: Well, Judy, we—you say that you're retired. I look around. I've known you for a very long time. Are there issues that you are still passionate about and lobbying on to change or correct? What . . .

[02:06:42] JN: There's still issues I'm passionate about, but I'm not really lobbying so much. Certainly the issues of things like discrimination. Like the legislation, be it in Arkansas or elsewhere, against transgender or lesbian or gay or anyone. I'm for more humane or, you're right, public causes. I want education to progress. I want better health care for everybody. You know, it may sound like pie in the sky, but nothing happens if all of us sit back and wait for someone else. Now here I ran to be a delegate from Virginia. I didn't know a soul of—with help, because always there's help from other people, I did get elected.

And I was there. And of course, the Clinton years are almost category of their own for any of us from Arkansas. But I do still now and then support candidates here. And you know, I'd prefer a governor who I share—I think a lot of Tim Kaine, actually. I worked for Linwood Holton, who's Anne Holton Kaine's father. I learned a lot. And Linwood Holton was a moderate, very moderate Republican. But I've worked for people in both parties. But I think now the cause would be where can you possibly be effective? My getting out here and stomping around isn't going to change anyone. They'll just think, "Oh, she's deranged." My giving money, my helping to raise money probably helps. And I send it where I think it really does help. But you know, I learned a lot from your brother's race because—or certainly with Clinton, the joke was—I'd be in Washington. If a penny was on the sidewalk, I'd get it to give to Clinton. [*DP laughs*] I gave more money than I had personally. I raised more money. I never worked harder than I did in the Bill Clinton campaigns. That was true of Mark's campaign. We needed to win, and we needed money. And I'm not proud. I'll ask you.

DP: I—believe me, Judy, I know.

JN: And you know, I come in [*laughs*] on Monday morning with my beggings.

[02:09:26] DP: You're not afraid. Now given your rich background, family background, in politics and your career in Washington, DC, I'm just curious, did you ever consider running for public office? I know you were a delegate. I know you were class president at Holton-Arms, but any federal office did you ever have your eye on? Did you ever consider that?

JN: Oh, I toyed. How could you not? And I toyed within—with—about Arkansas, and then I thought I couldn't be elected dogcatcher. Let's be realistic. I'm too arrogant. I'm too independent. [*DP laughs*] And they—someone would say, "Gal, you don't know what you're talking about." And I'd say, "You're not right," or something. I never thought the climate was right. Now I know Hattie Caraway was the first senator, but these are—but it's a different if you're a widow, even though you have to be elected, although you could be appointed to the Senate. But I never thought I had a base that was appropriate. And I don't—my family never lost, actually. I hadn't been through losing. And I'm not fond of losing. And so why would I start with me?

DP: [*Laughs*] Well, that's a good response.

JN: And I don't think I could have won. But did I want to? Did I imagine that I could do [*laughs*] better than some members of

Congress? You betcha.

[02:10:59] DP: [*Laughs*] I'm gonna leave that one there. But I would say, when you support these younger candidates or folks that are coming up that you see promise in politically, do you ever give them advice? Do you ever say, "You should focus on this" or, "Perhaps you should consider this?" What would you tell a young candidate today who wanted to run for office?

JN: I think I'd say first, "Tell me why you wanna run." And then secondly, "Give me, on a legal pad, just bullets mapped so that you—what would you do if you were trying to hire a campaign ma—or get a campaign manager? If you want someone to raise money for you, what are they gonna sell? Beyond the fact that you may or may not, and you probably have, a college degree, do you have advanced degrees? How'd you get 'em? Why'd you major? What do you know, and what do you bring to the party? And who are you running against?"

DP: Those are very good things to ask.

JN: But you've gotta know yourself because, you know, when you think about it, and you've watched it in your own family, all of us reflected our family. A lot of what we did, even mistakes we made, were reflecting our understanding of the political process and where we fit in, although we weren't the principals. If you

don't know that for yourself when you're running, you can't guide anyone else to follow you, I don't think.

[02:12:41] DP: I would agree. And I would like to—what I'd like to do—I'm gonna ask one question, and it goes back to when we first met. But then I want to turn to arts, and I wanna talk about your collection and why you collect. But my most vivid memory of meeting Judy Norrell is when you told me—and we are of the same soil in Arkansas, not very far apart. You told me that you were gonna go back to Arkansas to get your tombstone. Would you like to [*JN laughs*] elaborate on that story a bit?

JN: Well, it amused your mother even more [*DP laughs*] than it did you, as a matter of fact. That—I think I—and I wrote something to that effect, which I think is the preface to *Myth, Memory and Imagination*, which is an art show that was curated and sponsored by the McKissick Museum at the University of South Carolina. When I'm really just exasperated beyond belief with Arkansas, and you're thinking, "What can I do?" and all, I used to always think, "Well, I don't have to be buried here. I don't have to ever go back. And I'll just go home and get Catherine and W. F. out of the Oakland Cemetery in Monticello, and we'll just move." Well, it sounds absurd, except it's not the—I've thought that very recently and thought, "I wonder how much it

costs to dig 'em up and bring 'em up here, and we can just all go in the pond out here." [*Laughter*] And what a story, handled right, in the *Democrat Gazette*.

DP: [*Laughs*] Oh.

[02:14:25] JN: Other than they'd say, "The loony came home." You know, if—you certainly could get press, I think, doing that. And so the thought has occurred to me for a long time. Now Mother and Father would die at that waste of money. [*Laughter*] I just hear them saying, "You—have you lost your mind? You go wherever you want, but don't drag us with you." But that's what it was about. It's always that attempt to make peace. And the war seems so great. I don't do it as constantly. But my executor, who's from a Southern state—she's from Alabama. But she said to me one time, "I'm not gonna take you to Arkansas. You're always unhappy about this, that, and the other. I'm not gonna go all the way to Monticello just to put your urn in the ground." And I was actually shocked. And I thought, "Well, who are you to decide?" [*Laughter*] Suddenly I thought, "Well, don't tell me I can't go to the Oakland Cemetery in Monticello if I want." Some friends of mine from Monticello who have married but their husbands wanted to be buried at sea or whatever have actually said to me, "We're thinking about

whether to get buried at the Oakland Cemetery." And then we'll debate. Then we'll—they'll say, "Oh, I don't know about that. And you know, my children don't want to go all the way to Monticello," as if we're all gonna visit these graves for—time and time again. [*DP laughs*] But that's the origin. The genesis of that is my final disgust. And it's probably based a little on Faulkner's as *I Lay Dying* and the drama of death and the seriousness.

DP: Well, it's—I'm glad you brought this . . .

JN: But your mother read that the night that show opened. And she said the next morning—she read the whole essay. And she said the next morning, "I laughed myself to sleep." [*Laughter*]

[02:16:37] DP: Well, while we're on that topic, and then we'll go to art, tell me about—how would you like to be remembered? What—is it your accomplish—tell me more about how you would like to be remembered, if you think about this kind of thing. It's too early for that, of course, but . . .

[02:16:56] JN: No, it's not. [*Laughter*] You better to get around to thinking about it if you're going to. But I don't know. That's a hard question, actually, because I think—you know, I wish I had more time to do more. And I'm probably lazy. I should have written more. And I still may, but I don't know that I will. But I

would like to be remembered for someone who did fight and fight for rights I believe in, including fighting for your right to disagree with me. I'd like to think that in supporting people in politics, be they family or otherwise, you contribute to the American way of life. And I don't mean that in a corny way, but that you put yourself out, and they're out there exposing themselves for whatever reasons, and they're not always good reasons. But for example, I'm not a Trump supporter, have never been, and would blow my brains out before I would support him. On the other hand, I'll fight for your right to support him, but not to abort the Constitution of the United States. To me, it's important you take a stance, even if it costs you. And again, that's probably the genesis of politics. At what point do you do the pragmatically expedient thing and at what point do you do the idealistic thing? And that's the art I think's the hardest to have.

[02:18:43] DP: Well, that's a great answer. And I wanna turn the topic just a little bit to something you're gonna be very comfortable with. And that's your art. Judy, the frame of this camera cannot begin to capture the art that we are surrounded by just in this home. But we know, and you told us, you have three storage units, temperature controlled, of course, full of art.

And we know that there's other art in museums around the country. I tried to count up the number of pieces in your home today, and I just gave up. [*JN laughs*] It's hard to imagine. But it's so interesting to look at the totality of your art, but there is a theme and a common connection that seems to run through all of it. And you've very much focused on African American folk art. Is that a good way to characterize your ilk, your passion?

[02:19:50] JN: I—well, let me say about the art—'cause I don't think it's unrelated to politics. I think it came out of politics. When you're told to be quiet in seven different languages, how can you talk? [*DP laughs*] I think I arrived at collecting the art as a way to talk. That is—and I think people often learn or are intrigued by visual more than anyone lecturing them, whether in classroom, in a courtroom, or on the streets. Or in friendly meetings. Hence, the art came partially out of nostalgia for the Arkansas I missed. The place, the horses, and the bird dogs, and the people hunting, and the dice schemes in Virgil Trotter—or Virgil White's place were—all of that I began to communicate. For a long time, first, by taking pictures myself, and also by beginning to see how other people depicted art. [02:20:59] For example, I'm a great admirer of William Faulkner. When I first drove to William Faulkner's Oxford, Mississippi, I actually hit the

parking meter at the courthouse because I was so overawed. This is Faulkner's Confederate statue, just like mine is in the Oakland Cemetery in Monticello. Suddenly the Snopes family was a reality. Now you can—you could sort of cast these from people you knew. But what I think I did successfully, but not with a great deal of knowledge beforehand, was get art that depicted parts of the South with all the warts and ugliness, but all the beauty and compassion and kindness. And people like Jay Williams, who was then the curator at the McKissick who's now retired, came to my house after a small show at the Phillips Collection in Washington of just photographs—and they'd put together *Myth, Memory and Imagination*, and that traveled to places as diverse as the North Dakota Museum of Art, The Art—then Arkansas Art Center, now Arkansas Museum of the Arts. They went to venues in Georgia, in Louisiana, et cetera. And I guess in a way, Paul Roth, who wrote about me in the forward to that or in the Common Ground catalog later—I guess in a sense it allowed me to talk. If you see a William Christenberry K-House, Klan house, a drawing with the elongated figures of a building—and he's known for these K-Houses. He's from Alabama. He's a graduate of—was a graduate of the University of Alabama. He lived all the turmoil of all of us who were caught

up in that. And if you see that and then you see a painting by William Clarke, who's at Blackstone less than fifty miles from here, an African American, untrained artist, of a pickup truck at night taking down a body that has been lynched. And when I bought the William Clarke, friends said, "You can't add that to a show as it tries to travel." And I said, "Try me." [*DP laughs*] Now Jay Williams aided and abetted. And that became part of that show that traveled. [02:23:48] Now *Myth, Memory, and Imagination* went to the Arkansas Arts Center, and Townsend Wolfe was in there. It would never have gotten there if your mother and Jamie Williams hadn't come to the opening in the—at the McKissick and decided they wanted it to come. And you know, no one gets in their way when they really get geared up. And so it went to Arkansas. And of all the venues, it was the one that was different to me because that's my red clay. I—it—that wasn't that it had no Southern venues. You could—hard to beat Alabama and Mississippi and some other Southern states. But the *Democrat Gazette*—and I think it's the only time I've ever been in the religion section of any paper—wrote or someone wrote a little article saying that two young African Americans—and 3M paid to bring students in from other places in Little Rock—were in the gallery, and it was noon, it wasn't

crowded. They were kind of skipping through, you know, but they had to go 'cause it was part of their homework or something. And according to this writer, they stopped next to *The Lynching Retrieval*, the piece by William Clarke, and the Christenberry K-House. And according to the writer, and I'm paraphrasing, I don't remember it totally, but he said, "Like curators or like prospective collectors buying, they looked, and they looked. And the older one got it and was silent. And the younger boy looked, and then he got it. And they paused for a moment, they turned, and they walked quietly as if they were in church out of the Arkansas Art Center." To me, that entire show, and certainly to Bill Christenberry, was worth everything we put into it because of that. That's the—so to me the art is the part that's almost living. But it allowed me a free speech. If I gave a speech about integration, you wouldn't be sitting there. They wouldn't have stopped dead. It's when you take the visual and touch people's being and the essence of people and maybe even touch souls of people. And I think that's part of the greatness of art. And so I've collected, but it's almost an emotional necessity. Now a lot of my friends would say, "She's a spendthrift, she shouldn't do that, and don't listen to a bit of that bullshit." [*DP laughs*] But it—to me, it's the essence of living.

[02:26:48] DP: Well, Judy, this is amazing. I know you very well. I know that this art is—it speaks for you. Can you—if you had to give that speech through your art, or if you had to curate another major exhibition, what do you think you would entitle it? Or what are some of the themes you would want to convey to let your art speak?

[02:27:14] JN: Well, I think now, because so much work—well, I could probably borrow back work I've given to other institutions, but that's all costly. Everything in life revolves around money for certain kinds of endeavors. I think what I would hope would be the perspective that you don't expect. The perspective of people who may be homeless and addicts at I think it's 127th Street in Harlem. There's a photographer who has, for ten years, photographed at night in those conditions. I bought four of his photographs. They're in the other room, actually. But these are not addicts or people in poor clothing or in the sewer or the gutter. All you see is the face. And in my mind, you see or you attempt to see or try to understand into the soul of those people. Now this is a Judyism. I decided that's what it meant, I bought four of them, they're hanging. When the package came or the crate, an African American man who does some work for me here was helping me unload. And I said, "Don't you like

these?" He said, looking at the bloodshot eyes of one, and they're in color, "Looks like an addict to me." [*Laughs*] So art is in the eye of the beholder. But even so, if he looks like an addict, and he probably was, it's a different perspective of how you look into an addict's eyes or a man's eyes. And two of them are women, I think, and two are the other. From that, I bought a very simple photograph, which again is in the other room, and it's by Chester Higgins, who worked for the *New York Times.* It—the title of the piece is *Alabama*. But what is it? It's a young boy, his hand raised with a fist in a field in Alabama. And I think Chester Higgins is from Alabama. But to me, there's a young person. And it personifies struggle, desire, youth. What direction? Where are you going from a field in Alabama? [02:29:58] Now since then, I've added to that wall a Carrie Mae Weems, who's a very distinguished and very well-known African American photographer. And there's a piece called *Bless This Child*. It's of a young African American girl. But over it is—in the glass, it has "God bless this child" and the music. The notes of music. Well, that piece is the most expensive piece I've ever personally bought, believe it or not. It, and it's done with a red circular background. And it's hanging. Okay. To me, that personified what is this all about? It is God bless the child, the

child of any color or hue or socioeconomic background. And then I kind of added to that, and I'm still adding because I don't know exactly where I'm going, but I'm trying to convey how important it is that we see into the souls of others, that we don't just see rioting in the streets. We don't let politicians of any party depict the Black Lives Matter as if it was some trivialized thing. Because I believe for young people it's important. It's very important. White, Black, Asian, whatever. But you know, how do you show that in more contemporary terms? I'm not sure this wall does it yet, but I know what I'm trying to accomplish if that answers part of your question.

[02:31:50] DP: That answers part, Judy. And I wanted to go just a little deeper on the young African American artists that you've mentioned. The young boy with his fist raised in the field. I know that you support these artists. And William Clarke is one. You introduced me to William Clarke. I have many of his pieces now, thanks to you and that connection. And it's very powerful. But not all of the art that you buy is well known or, you know, widely published. When you meet these artists, I know you support—you help them financially by purchasing their art. But do you ever get the chance to interact and actually perhaps mentor or inspire them with—what is your process when you

meet these young artists?

[02:32:40] JN: Well, I think actually it's like friendship. You—I mean—for example, Whitfield Lovell, who's an African American artist, now middle-aged and who DC Moore in New York represents. And his partner is a man named Fred Wilson, who is well known, represented us in the Venice Biennale a few—I don't know how many years ago. But they are dynamic, trained, but major African American artists. But I bought him, and now I don't know that I can afford. Sometimes you start with artists, and then you can't afford to keep up with buying them. But I find I buy art mainly, not always, mainly because it moves me. If it moves me, then what does it go with? And part of this is the corruption of having these museum shows. You get to thinking you have all the space [*laughs*] that a real art museum has and, "Oh, I'll just do a series here, and I wanna illustrate this, that, and the other." So my reach often overshot my ability. But on the other hand, I don't know any more soul moving experience than art when it's not propaganda. When you are open, it's almost Rorsharch-like. You are open to receive an image, and you can make of it what you will. And I think it does move mountains. I think a person who would no more listen to you or me lecture them, doesn't wanna hear a

word about Shakespeare, will see something they relate to. Now I have a lot and I'm interested in African American art. I never define myself as an African American collector because there's also the landscape of the land. There's the Ansel Adams. There are all those things. [02:34:54] And for example, I'm looking now at some pieces by an artist named Kenro Izu, and Howard Greenberg represents him in New York. But he has done a series called *Eternal Light*, I think, dealing with what is Banares in India and the City of Death. But it's—the name of his book is *Eternal Light*. I'm intrigued. I haven't bought yet. It's on my iPhone. [*DP laughs*] I'm intrigued because what if you compare eternal light, the Hindu concept and all, and these images where you're in a garbage city, in many ways. You're in the middle of COVID. They're having to bury people as fast as they can cremate them. It—Benares is in some ways City of Death. How do you equate that with Christianity or other places? And what has COVID shown us? The commonality that really affects us all. And we're not used to thinking globally, really. We're very self-centered and at times terribly parochial. But I'm curious, what can you combine that concept of eternal light in a Hindu city, and a city and a country that certainly has other religions? And how do—what Christian or what other image—what do you do?

And see, to me, that's the constant search. Now sometimes you can't afford to do it, but think how much your life's been enriched by art.

DP: In some part, thanks to you.

[02:36:52] JN: Well, I can't think of a better thing to help. And you want the art to live. Long after I'm gone the art will be hopefully someplace. And I think Pate Felts was with me and Ron not long ago at the Phillips Collection. All right. There were some gifts, not all, but some gifts of mine that are in that hundredth-anniversary show. And I got a thank you note from a woman who went with me recently. And Dawn Abel, you may have met her and Regina Rose. And she was apologizing for not thanking me for Christmas gifts or something. But she talked about how special it was to go to the Phillips, to have the curator of that show talk about it, and Pate and Ron have, too. And what did I feel? Well, I did feel, and I was sitting in a wheelchair, and I was seeing the entire show. And that's every gallery of the Phillips Collection, the mansion and the newer annex. And I felt pride, and I thought how lucky I was to live with these pieces. And you see them as you see old friends, and you're cognizant you may not see them again, but what a fine way to see them taken care of, being shared in a collection you respect and love.

So in that sense, I think the art is the ongoing thing. And when I say it's my salvation, it keeps you going. You wanna get up for one more show, one more trip to a gallery.

[02:38:44] DP: Well, Judy, you're certainly surrounded by many of your friends, and they are just beautiful. I recently was in Arkansas. And I had the great luxury of going to the new museum there . . .

SL: Crystal Bridges.

DP: Crystal Bridges. And I'd never been. And I know it's been there, I now believe, ten years. And I think you know where I'm going with this question. Crystal—if Arkansas can have a Crystal Bridges, do you envision your—some part of your art collection ever ending up in Arkansas, whether it's Fort Smith or Little Rock or perhaps Crystal Bridges? Is that something that you envision? Is it something you've thought about?

[02:39:34] JN: Well, obvi—I—well, of course I've thought about it, and I have toyed with it. But it's one of these floating crap games [*laughter*] I engage in with Arkansas where you think you're being really won over, and it is home, then, bam, something happens. So I'll tell you frankly, and we perhaps should think about whether we want to say this, but I have thought about it in terms, actually, of the Arkansas Art Center,

now the Arkans—whatever they did during COVID. They renamed it the Arkansas Museum of Art. And their chief curator came here and spent a day in those three storage units in Farmville, Virginia, and came to this house. Plosive person, not a native Southerner. I think from elsewhere. I think from Cleveland, if I recall. And I said, "Make me a deal I can't refuse." Well, [*laughs*] I mean, you have to have some sense of humor, but I don't have this highly developed one. [*DP laughs*] He left his notes in my storage unit. So he wrote me and asked if I'd send his notes. And I don't know what got into me that I didn't read 'em and decide right then [*laughter*], but I didn't. And I actually sent 'em, and I've forgot whether it cost ten dollars or twelve. But I resented that that I had to send the notes back he took. But I thought, "Oh, you're so honest, and you sent 'em." [02:41:10] I had done—now the Phillips Collection director had come here and—Elsa Smithgall who's the curator of the current Way of Seeing show for the centennial. And I really expected—I didn't think I was asking with no strings attached. I asked several museums, "Come, I'll let you look at everything I have, and tell me your—what you'd be interested in, why it fits, what pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of what you have in your collection, and we'll talk." Okay. The Phillips collection

within, let's say, two months sent me a list. I've heard from other places. In the case of the Arkansas Museum for the Arts, other than their name change, that's about all I've heard. But in fact, I just got a call and said, "Will you send me your complete inventory?" And I was so shocked I almost fell off that deck. [*DP laughs*] And I said no. And I guess he was so shocked he almost fell off his porch or something in Little Rock. But I said, "The whole point, because I have so many unknown or not-as-known artists and all, of having people take the time, is to try to mix in. Everyone knows, for example, William Christenberry—I don't think there is a museum in the country that would turn down the construction, in this house, of Bill Christenberry. I know the givens. I know pretty much the market value, although you don't know to a penny. It's not a stock market transaction. But I was stunned that you expected me—like it was a cafeteria or a restaurant menu to just 'We'll let you know what we might want.'" [02:43:18] Now I've been in the storage at the Arkansas Museum of the Arts. There are a lot of holes in their collection, including Arkansas artists. When *Myth, Memory, and Imagination* went to the Arkansas Arts Center, then, there was a request to remove the Arkansas artists. And I said to Townsend, "No." Like there was Mrs. Otis who sold in the

market for years in Little Rock, an African American artist. Mrs. Otis was so thrilled to have a piece of hers hanging in her museum in Little Rock, Arkansas. You could see one less Walker Evans vintage print, and maybe for the first time someone would see Mrs. Otis. You could see other artists, Arkansas artists. You know, there are more than one, actually. And I find—that's the thing about the Arkansas Art Center that I find irritating beyond belief. It isn't that you have to nurture everyone who has a paintbrush or a canvas, but you have to nurture your own backyard. And I know any number of artists who are fine artists and should at least have a shot. And it seems like it's always, "Let someone else. Let a gallery in Fayetteville do it. Let someone in Pine Bluff do it." I'm not saying all the art is equal, but for example, I think in Hot Springs, there's a Dolores Justus gallery. She's a painter, I think a good one. There's a piece of hers in the hall there. And I'm a great admirer that she keeps a gallery open and functional in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and shows other Arkansas artists. [02:45:26] And there're a fair amount here. But I don't call myself an Arkansas collector. I will always look. But I don't wanna buy everything anyone in Arkansas does. But you see, I want to think of that museum as nurturing, not just a place where you can see some art dictated by other

choices, but you even see contemporary art, you see art that your peers have done if you're a young Arkansan. And I don't know—now I'll be criticized for saying a damn word about it. "If she doesn't like it, she could come down here and give us blah, blah, blah." But I think that they are failing at that task. Now from what I am told by people who have had a show right before COVID and from people I know in the art world, the bigger world, the museum I hear the most about it and the most favorable discussion about it in Arkansas—and when I go to Arkansas next, I want to go there and see for myself—is the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith.

DP: Hmm.

[02:46:36] JN: I've heard nothing but good things about the scholarship. There are two photographers in Santa Fe, David Scheinbaum and Janet Russek. They happen to be married. And they—their last show before COVID was at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith. Like many—and they also are photography dealers in Santa Fe. But like many art photography people, they can't keep Alabama, Arkansas and Alaska straight. [*DP laughs*] So I'll get a call. "You know, there's a really great piece of graves in Alaska." "Why are you calling me?" "Well, isn't that what you collect?" But they said it was a beautiful

show, and they sent me installation pieces. And then whoever ran it drove them to Fayetteville. And they said, "You know, it's a beautiful drive from Fort Smith to Fayetteville." And they were raving. And I said, "Well, I know." But you see, it says something to me. Whatever it is about that, it's getting really good attention that's solid from people who have nothing to gain because they are praising the museum in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Now I've been to Crystal Bridges once or twice. There's a lot to like. I think the beautiful—the building is beautiful. I think it—the way it's out of nature. I admire the collection they've acquired. I don't know Alice Walton, so I don't—I'm not anti Alice Walton, but I also wonder where Crystal Bridges goes. [02:48:20] But I'm not from your part of the state or the Fayetteville—that general part. So I wanted the Arkansas Museum of the Arts to succeed so people from Drew County don't always go to the University of Arkansas, or from Warren, but they don't—do go to Little Rock. And there's room enough for things to be in Fayetteville and things to be in Little Rock. And you would hope Pine Bluff or El Dorado. But what I think is missing is a mandate. And I don't know how you explain it because unless you have people well-to-do, and in some cases there are people like that, that a museum reflects them or a

small cadre. How do you get it so the Arkansas artists from Warren, Bradley County, Arkansas—how do you get that person's attention? Not everyone can go to Fayetteville, but they can go to the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, or they can go in Fort Smith, or they can go wherever else. [02:49:34] You know, I think art—and I think there've been efforts to have it taught in the schools of Arkansas. I think that it should be more encouraged. And I've never gone to Arkansas I haven't found some art. And by art I include Leon Niehues, the basket maker who's from Huntsville, I think. He's one of the top tier basket makers internationally and certainly in this country. He rarely shows. He's totally at home with himself and at peace with himself. He isn't going to change his way of life if the Metropolitan wanted to do a show tomorrow. He's a treasure. Now there has been some publicity. I mean, he has been written up a little. But you need to sort of think about doing a show that congratulates but makes people see—the person who carves and makes baskets, whether it be in Mississippi Delta or Arkansas Delta or Huntsville, Arkansas, or El Dorado. That person is expressing themselves, and some of them are pretty good. It's true of other—it's true of wood turning. [02:51:01] But many people wanna divide the world into rigid crafts. If

you're a craftsman, you're supposed to almost be barefoot, I think, in the hills and sing or yodel or something. [*DP laughs*] But there are some really gifted craftsmen. I don't know how encouraged they are. Now you know about Leon Niehues, you know about a number of these artists. I don't know how many people do. But—and I'm not saying they've never been shown, but they need to be congratulated. And then you've got the extreme of Robyn Horn, who is not a poor, struggling artist, but who is very supportive of other artists, is in very fine collections, but you shouldn't rely on Robyn Horn to give you her work. You ought to appreciate it instead of saying, "Oh, you know, Robyn Horn, you know." And so I guess I'm trying to be a salesman for the V.L. Cox, the **Elizabeth Weaver**, the Robyn Horn, the Danny Coston, who was originally from Monticello who's in Fayetteville now, the Leon Niehues. They all speak to you if you'd let 'em. I'm not sure the Arkansas Arts Center or maybe Arkansas itself has had the time yet, but maybe they should take time to smell the roses in Arkansas.

[02:52:27] DP: Well, Judy, I'm not sure where your tombstone is gonna end up [*JN laughs*], but I do hope that some of your art will go back to Arkansas because . . .

JN: Well, I know you're hustlin' me. [*Laughter*] Come on, Dee.

DP: I'm a lobbyist at the end of the day and an advocate, and I—an advocate for Arkansas.

JN: Well, I'll promise you one thing.

DP: All right.

JN: Some will . . .

DP: Okay.

JN: . . . and I say this not to ingratiate myself, some will, but it will be in honor of the Pryor family.

DP: Well, that is just a very nice thing to say. And on behalf of the Pryor family, let me thank you for not only your service to Arkansas and to Washington, but for the Pryors themselves you have been an inspiration. You have opened our eyes to art such as William Clarke, Eldridge Bagley. In fact, you gave us an Eldridge Bagley for our wedding present. It was the nicest, most profound gift we had res—we received for our wedding. That was thirty—was twenty-nine years ago last week. Thank you very much. But you have been an inspiration for us and for so many. And I wanted to just thank you for that as a personal note from me and the Pryor family.

JN: Well, pretty soon we'll just weep together. [*Laughter*]

[02:53:57] DP: Well, I'm glad the camera's not on me because I've got a few tears, but it's because you have been such a great

person. Your family has contributed so much to the great state of Arkansas and everywhere else.

JN: Well, I think you and I share that kindred feeling of the bad and the good of politics. And there . . .

DP: Yeah.

JN: . . . really has been, and I think for our families, more good than bad. And I think that's what we all long for is that we restore politically in this country, not just Arkansas, a civility that allows people to talk, be it through music or art or politics, which is an art in a way. And that if we could just get through spitting at each other [*laughs*] or . . .

DP: Yeah.

JN: . . . hissing like cats in an alley, I think we'll get there. But I think the bridge is—one of the bridges, and for me the most effective, is art, where you can show love without looking weak. You can show compassion and the depth of it in the midst of poverty or suffering, you see that spark of life or intellect, et cetera. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts is one of the, I would argue, one of the best museums in the country, and they've been supported, and the Mellon family and others have played an instrumental role. But their current director, if I'm not mistaken, Alex, came out of Mississippi. Now you could ask,

what are you gonna get to get some director out of Mississippi? And yet that's a museum that's sophisticated. It's appreciated nationally and internationally. It seems to—now all of them need and want more money and they always have a hand out. But that's a state museum that should be emulated, and I prefer it, but maybe it's because I live in Virginia, to, say, the High Museum. But the High Museum, the New Orleans Museum of Art—Arkansas shouldn't be not in the same league. I don't think they are as yet, but they should aspire to be.

[02:56:24] DP: Well, I hope you'll give them that direction.

JN: Well, I think what we'll have to do is edit [*laughter*] this conversation out or we'll both be run out on a rail.

DP: Well, it wouldn't be . . .

JN: But you asked me, and I answered.

DP: It wouldn't be the first time, would it? In fact, when I met with this wonderful crew, we sat down, and I tried to describe your personality. And I know you won't take offense to this, but I said, "Judy is someone that doesn't mind going against the grain. She doesn't follow convention." And frankly, I think that's one of the reasons I admire you. I think it's also the reason you have been so successful. And perhaps it's the reason your art collection is so fabulous.

[02:57:12] JN: And I was the first woman member of the 116. Now there's a feat. [*Laughter*]

SL: Wow. I did not know that.

JN: Oh, yes. If you were—if—I don't know if you knew JD Williams. JD Williams and I were in law school together, but he was a big Washington fancy lawyer. But he's a country boy from Oklahoma. But we were in the 116. And they always let women come.

DP: And tell them what The 116 Club is.

JN: Oh, The 116 Club is a private club in Washington, but it's on the Hill up near the Capitol. And most of the clientele are indeed involved in politics from—it's nonpartisan. And it's sort of shabby genteel. [*SL laughs*] You know, the furniture I think they bought from the Salvation Army fifty years ago, maybe. The bartender knows everyone, and his daughter is now the major person. When I first went there, Lee Williams, who worked for Fulbright, of course, was there. And David Lambert was almost like a member of a choir there. I mean, you could always find either Lee or David there, but they didn't have women. So I was agitating one day, and I saw JD, and JD was a big, hulking man, and he was at the bar. And I rumbled up like a buffalo in heat [*laughter*] to the bar and said, "JD, you oughta

have women in this club." And JD looked at me, and he said, "Why would that be?" And I said, "As full members, because we're equal to you." And he had either bourbon or scotch in a little round glass. And he said, "Well, who would we put in?" And I said—'cause Pat Harris was then secretary of HHS. Pat probably had no more interested in bein' in the 116 than being assassinated. But I says, "Pat Harris." And he actually crushed that glass. [*Laughter*] And pretty soon Johnny called and said, "We decided to allow a few women in."

DP: See, you just gotta speak up, Judy. Your voice is powerful.

JN: Well, I don't—it was just fear that a whole nest of us would come. [*Laughter*] You know, we could control one or two, but my God, what if they all march in here and demand something?

[02:59:55] DP: Well, now Judy, I know I mentioned this earlier. I know you're pretending to be retired, but you still have a lot of life left in you. What's next? What do you wanna work—what are you doing next?

JN: Well, I'm going to the dentist and what [*laughter*]—I'm gonna try to keep the carcass working for a while longer. And then I would like, but I doubt if I have the discipline, to do a lot of writing. But I'm trying to decide what to do with some of the art and where it fits gaps in collections. And you know, at a point

you do—at eighty-six, it's not maudlin to know your time could be up any day. You hope it's painless. You go to sleep, you don't wake up, and someone can decide whether to go to Monticello or just put me in the pond down here. But you kind of are constantly trying to assimilate what is important to do? Who can you help that you care about? And you're constantly—it's kind of not unlike India and the Hindu experience of death and their cremations. You constantly are surrounded at eighty-six with loss. And you kind of have to try to make peace with it. So how much do you set goals and how far can you get with them? And who might carry on if you start something and you don't have time to finish?

DP: That's a good answer. I'm gonna turn to my friend Scott Lunsford and I . . .

JN: To do the benediction?

DP: Well, no. [*Laughter*] No, I just wonder if there's anything else that we should cover.

[03:01:50] SL: I wanna know how you ended up in this location.

JN: How what?

SL: How you ended up here.

JN: Oh. I read it an ad . . .

SL: [*unclear words*]

JN: . . . I read an ad in the *Washington Post*, and it was shortly after my mother died.

DP: Okay.

JN: And I had thought about getting a place in Arkansas. And then I thought how exasperating [*DP laughs*] it'd be to have the good old boys outsmart you all the time, and you'd be paying for it to boot. And it's still a flight, you know, you can't just hop off for the weekend easily all the time. So I just said, "Oh, I'll look in Virginia." So I called, and I wrote on the back of an envelope, you take I-95, and then you get on Powhite, but I spelled it *P-O-O-R* White. I thought—but it's Powhite. It's Indian, actually. And then you get on—and I thought the woman said chicken ham. So I said to someone, "Those are the oddest [*laughter*] directions, but I'm goin' to Poor White and then chicken ham, then I'll get on 360, and I turn off, and I'll see the realtor in Victoria." And so Terri Dean, do you remember her? Her husband was the head of the Governor's Association.

DP: Got it.

JN: Ray Scheppach. And Terri was from Alabama and from South Carolina. And she was very Southern, and she was assigned to keep me from doing anything like buying. So we roared down here, and we got to—we made one little wrong turn so—but we

got to Victoria, and we were to call—the realtor's name, I think was—I know it was Linda Smith. And so we stopped at a restaurant in Victoria called The Dutch Tree. And we went in, and we got hot, fresh pie and really good coffee. And oh, this was so Southern. And she reminisced about South Carolina, and I reminisced about Arkansas. And this woman came, and she said, "I'm sorry," 'cause it was a deer season, "My husband's dog crates are in the back. Do you mind?" So we had these hounds howling [*laughter*] as we went around looking at property. And this is the old Blankenship place. But as they would say locally, "There was a house here, but the hippies burned it down." [*Laughter*] And so we looked at the—this property and others, and then I said, "Take us back to the place the hippies burned down." So she did. And Terri was saying, "It's cold, it's November, it's about to snow. No one's gonna come grab anything in this godforsaken place." And I said, ignoring my friend, "I think I'll make an offer." So she said, "Well, would you mind—because I drive the school bus. [*Laughter*] Do you mind if we picked up the Lunenburg County school bus and went to my house?" So we went to this woman's house, which was not too far from here. And she got out the stuff, and she wrote down this and that, and I made an offer.

And Terri said, "You don't have to do this today." But then we got through, and we drove back to town. It was Friday, so there was Friday Night Football. We drove back to town and got our car.

[03:05:35] DP: You weren't on the—were you on the school bus at this point?

JN: On the school bus. [*Laughter*] And so we went to what was then the Victoria Restaurant, but it was on Main Street. And we went in, and we ordered Southern food. And both of us went in some nostalgia for the South that—and went into overdrive about it. And then she—I said, "Do you know where we are?" And they had mats, you know, placemats that had sort of a condensed map of Virginia. So we could figure we were somewhere not in Richmond, but not as far as whatever, South Hill. So we kind of got that. And she said, "I can't believe you did that." And I said, "Well, you know, it's a lot like Arkansas in my mind." And she said, "Okay." So we drove all the way back to Washington. And I worked for Linwood Holton then, who's the former governor of the state of Virginia. [03:06:37] And so the n—that Monday—this was on a Friday. So Monday I walked into Linwood's office, and I said, "Linwood"—and he wanted to borrow a .22 from me, so I had .22 long with me, and everyone

was almost under the desk. "What are those fools doing? You know, who comes in the office with a .22 long rifle?" But I said, "I brought your gun back you wanted to borrow." "Good thing, Gal." And then he—I said, "I bought in place I think in Virginia." Linwood looked at me, and he said, "Where'd you buy?" And I said, "I don't know. It's some funny county. I think it's Louie Bird or something." He said, "It's Lunenburg, and it's the most backward place in the whole state." [*Laughter*] And they called a little later, said they accepted my offer. So then, once I'd found it again—you kinda wanna didn't wanna bring a pup tent down here. So we—I found a local builder. And so I paid under $50,000 to build the original house. Now there's a room added. And all of us would come, not every weekend, but frequently. And it was fun because we—I would—the only two things I remember my family would never get me was a real gun and a pool table. And so when I got down here, two or three people gave me guns as house gifts. And then people came and you—well, you've been here when we'd all shoot. [*DP laughs*] And so we have the guns now. And I never have had room for the pool table, but someone gave me a small portable pool table. [*Laughter*] But I threw that out a few years ago.

[03:08:38] DP: Well, Judy, let's—you brought it up. Let's talk about

the guns for a minute. I know . . .

JN: Okay. Am I anti-gun?

DP: No, no. [*JN laughs*] I just—I love it that you have guns. And when my—she wasn't even my wife then. That was thirty years ago. But we came down here and were in search of a wild beaver that was just causing all kinds of chaos in your beautiful pond down there. Tell me about your gun collection. Is it mostly .22s and just target plinkers?

JN: No. Some I've given away. But I'm using memory, although I know where they are. There's—I have a .38 that's loaded and I keep where—if anyone invades, I might as well take 'em with me.

DP: Well, of course.

JN: And I have I have thir—a .22, a .30-06. I have a Ruger over and under shotgun. I have a Ruger .22 pistol. And my favorite gun is a Ruger, and it's a long barrel .22. Now I'm not really a very good shot, but I love the smell. And there are two smells that normal people don't love. One is the smell of powder, gunpowder. And the other thing I love is the sweat of a horse. And when you feel that, and you jump off the horse—and someone said, "Good Lord, we better get you Chanel No. 5 for Christmas." [*DP laughs*] And I said, "No, no," but you don't—

can't get in a bottle the horse sweat.

DP: Well, that is great.

[03:10:21] JN: And I don't know, I've had some other guns, but the—there's a family. You've met them too. The Morrisons and their mother went to Holton-Arms with me. And so there's John and Jeff, and then his—the youngest is Alyssa. Well, they're all married and grown up now. But John was here the other day 'cause he's competitively shooting later.

DP: Yes.

JN: And he went to Cartersville to take his guns to be gunsmithed. Evidently, in Cartersville is one of the best people in the country. And so he dropped by to see Aunt Judy. And long ago, he gave me a list of where he thought within his immediate family all my guns should go. And we kidded him unmercifully. He's now sixty, almost sixty-five. And I said, "I don't know where that letter you sent me is. [*Laughs*] I know where we are, but I understand"—and I named one of his cousins who's female—"is interested." And all the guns have gone to male members. And he said, "I don't think she's very interested, Aunt Judy." [*Laughter*]

[03:11:37] DP: Now there's one very important part of your life that we have not touched on. And I didn't want to get away without

talking about your dogs, your Jack Russells, and I don't mean the current one, Miss Tara, who is outside playing, but when I came here thirty years ago, you had a young Jack Russell named Craig. And I noticed on your wall in there you have five or six portraits of dogs.

JN: All procured by Eldridge Bagley and were gifts of dogs of mine.

DP: Okay.

JN: Yeah.

DP: So tell us about your dog and why Jack Russells.

JN: Well, the dogs go back to the—very early someone in Monticello when I was quite young gave me a bird dog. And I named him for my father, so his name was Bill. And I loved that dog. And actually Bill died at some point about the time I was graduating from Holton-Arms. And I decided I wanted his collar. It never occurred to me that he'd been buried and they'd have to undig him [*DP laughs*] and send me this smelly dog collar. Which Mother kept saying, "Don't you think you could put it on the porch?" "No, it's going right here." Whatever. And I only got rid of that collar recently, but Bill was the first. And so I've never been without a dog since. And I've had pugs. I've had bird dogs. And I—I've had Jack Russells. And the Jack Russells are very smart. [03:13:16] And for a while in Farmville,

Virginia, near here, there was the Jack Russell field trial. And the Jack Russells you see racing on TV and all, they're very fast dogs. And so this dog, we've taken to field trials once a year, and my friends, who normally you wouldn't think would get up that early, are thrilled that we go out. And there're probably a thousand dogs, and [*DP laughs*] people compete from all over the country. Because of COVID it didn't happen. But now on June 11—mind you, I changed a doctor's appointment and all—we're going to near Gettysburg for the trials. And it's like—getting reservations is like trying to get into the Bear Bryant Stadium when Alabama's playing at home. But we're—I was told, "Now get organized, cancel everything because we're gonna go take her"—and she's eight years old now—"to compete in the dog trials." So we're going to Pennsylvania to the Jack Russell show. If you've never been to one, they're real fun.

[03:14:24] DP: That is amazing, and Pate, unleash the hound. Let's get our star.

Pate Felts: Hey, I just—it just started raining a little bit.

DP: Okay.

PF: So I brought the tripod in?

DP: Okay.

PF: Are you—anything or—everything seems to be okay.

JN: Hey, Hound.

DP: Thanks.

PF: Well, we've been for lots of walks.

JN: Have you?

PF: Yes. She's been wanting to get in here.

DP: You go see Judy.

PF: And she . . .

DP: We've been talking about you.

PF: . . . hears your voice.

DP: We've been talking about you. Look here. [*Dog collar jingles*]

[03:14:54] JN: Well, you've been good to take care of her Uncle Pate. [*PF laughs*]

DP: Yes, you're just a good little dog. I'm sorry we've been ignoring you.

PF: So actually I walked in here with the puppy a little bit ago, and I realized that I'm in the . . .

DP: The shot.

PF: I was in the shot, yeah.

DP: We're still rolling. We're still rolling. Yeah. So anyway, so any fur—any last questions?

SL: Oh, man.

DP: Can you think of a few more while we have Judy here?

PF: Well, I caught a little bit of the interview. It's pretty wonderful.

[03:15:32] JN: Well, I was gonna say, I would like to say something when we're about through . . .

SL: Well . . .

JN: . . . because—and it sounds corny 'cause I've certainly said things that are not complimentary about Arkansas. But in truth, I think that in a way, I'm one of the luckiest people I know. Because not only did I have exceptional parents who overcame or rose way above their background, but always aspired and always shared. And that's quite a legacy all by itself. But also in my own strange, demented way, whether it's Brown Calhoun's store on the outskirts of Monticello, another place where nice girls don't go spend their time that I loved—but I had that early introduction to the life of people who aren't in Rodgers and Hammerstein, the simple folk. But they are folk who don't have the same or didn't have the same opportunities or aspirations. And a lot was given to me. The goodwill of people when I would be riding early in the morning, the generosity of spirit of African Americans—and I'd be dead, I think, if I were African American. I don't have the temperament to put up with what many, many of my African American friends or others have. Japanese. So when I look back on it, it wasn't all wonderful. There are things

you wish you'd done better. There are things you wish you hadn't done at all. But I have wealth in friends. And I think—it sounds like I'm paraphrasing Lou Gehrig, and in a way I am. As you face certainly the twilight of your life, you think how great the illumination was, and you kind of know you're at the night-light phase. But what a lucky person I've been thanks to so many other people. [*Applause*]

SL: Whoa.

DP: Fantastic. Fantastic.

JN: Tara, now you can put a PS on. [*Laughter*]

DP: Go ahead, Tara. Just say it. Just say it.

JN: That's Uncle Dee. [*DP laughs*] That's your Uncle Dee.

DP: Say, "He's been ignoring me all day."

[End of interview 03:18:05]