

**Oral History Interview of
Glen Wallace**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson
May 8, 2013
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**

Part of the:
American Agriculture Movement Interviews

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Interview Series Background:

The American Agriculture Movement grew out of the populist agrarian protests of the late 1970s. Officially chartered in August of 1977, it remains active. Materials in the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library reflect principally its formation, the tractorcade protests of 1977-1979, and the farm and rural suicide hotline prevention efforts of the 1980s. Materials include oral history interviews, photographs, video and film, and miscellaneous papers.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Dr. Glen Wallace, mental health professional and resident of Oklahoma. Glen discusses his long career as a counselor and therapist and his time spent counseling farmers during the Farm Crisis of the 1970s and '80s.

Length of Interview: 03:02:08

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Keywords

Oklahoma City Bombing, Timothy McVeigh, Willie Nelson, juvenile delinquents, depression, suicide hotline, Farm Crisis, American Agriculture Movement, psychiatry/psychology

Glen Wallace (GW):

They forced him into bankruptcy. They'd bought a cabin in New Mexico—Taos—and the attorneys went up there when they got him into bankruptcy and took all the pool tables and the furniture out of the cabin. They took their cattle and hauled them from their place, Forgan—Forgan's where they farmed, I believe—all the way to Guymon, and several head of cattle were missing when they got there. They took their farm machinery, their combine stuff, and roaded it to Spearman, and they beat everything up so it wouldn't bring a good price. I mean, there's so much bad stuff that went on that—

Andy Wilkinson (AW):

What's Wilma's last name again?

GW:

Dorman.

AW:

D-o-r-m-a-n?

GW:

D-o-r-m-a-n, yeah, Dorman.

AW:

And is she listed in the phone directory?

GW:

I've got her number. It's in my phone. Let me go get my phone.

AW:

Ok, great. That would help.

GW:

I'll get hers and Mona Lee's both. Mona Lee has videos on, that I've got missing, I think. We've got some from CNN, we've got some from the Educational Channel—we had a whole slew of videos. But Wilma's number is—let's see, her number is—

AW:

You're like me. When I got one of those smartphones, I forgot every phone number I ever knew because it remembered them.

GW:

You know, it just erased all of mine but it'll be in the recent calls. I don't know, it's got too many on there. [REDACTED]. That's by memory. I'm just almost sure that's right. Mona Lee Brock.

AW:

How do you spell Brock?

GW:

B-r-o-c-k.

AW:

And is it Mona Lee all one word?

GW:

It's two words.

AW:

M-o-n-a L-e-e?

GW:

Mm-hmm.

AW:

Okay. And she lives where?

GW:

She lives in Durant.

AW:

Durant, okay.

GW:

Let me see if I can find Mona Lee's number in here. Mona Lee. Oh, boy. Oh, boy. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] But Mona Lee's husband died with a heart attack during this farm crisis thing and they were pushed off their land over by Taylor. She devoted her life to running the Hot Light and working with Willie Nelson. We worked with Willie Nelson through his depression after he had his IRS problem, and his daughter lived up in Branson, and she spent several months in Mona Lee's home—she's got problems. And then all three of us, his daughter and Mona Lee and I, went to several concerts together, like at Iowa State at Ames, when he did

his concert there. Willie has a bedroom in the back of his bus and about the only phone call he'll take is Mona Lee's.

AW:

Really? (laughter)

GW:

But anyway, Mona Lee—but anyway, you may want to visit them. This is probably the best—a guy that attended some farm wakes with me and saw me get people alcohol treatment—this is Joel Dyer. He rode a motorcycle. He said, "I want to write a book about this." He went to a farm wake of getting [inaudible, something about Gideon Powell]. And then we had a deal at the church. We always furnished a chili supper at their church, and they would call it a farm wake, and he said, "I'm going to write a book." Oh no, the way it started—he called me at two o'clock in the morning after the Oklahoma City bombing, and he says, "They got a picture of John Doe number 2, and that's Gideon Powell." I thought the same thing when I saw it and I said, "Joel, you're the—" He was a publisher of the Bolder Weekly at the time, and I said, "Joel, you're the writer, I'm the psychologist. You have obligations, I don't," you know, unless he's really guilty. So he's said, "I'm going to write a book. Will you help me?" So all the stuff you're going to see, I worked with him for a year. Right in the middle of writing this book about the farm crisis, *Harvest of Rage*, the Oklahoma City bombing—how did that happen? Maybe it's before the bombing we started the book.

AW:

Now, this has a photograph of the bombing.

GW:

Yeah. We started it before. After the bombings [inaudible, something about Gideon Powell]. Two o'clock in the morning he called me one night, but it was before the bombing. I said, "I'll help you, Joel." Well, anyway—I forgot where I was—oh, after the bombing, Harper Collins called Joel and they gave him fifteen thousand dollars to start the book. They called him and said, We want you to rename the book *and The Oklahoma City Bombing. Harvest of Rage and the Oklahoma City Bombing*. Joel says, "I won't do that." They say, Well, we're paying for it. We want it on there for getting up sales. So they moved our publication date from—it was to be in the last day of September, up to July the first, in his connection with what's-his-name's trial in Denver. And they wanted a book to come out about the time of his trial.

AW:

In time for that, yeah.

GW:

So it turned into—the latter part of the book is stuff that he and I—now, I've got a copy of the book. I was going to go out and get it but I still work. I still see patients. I had to work all day yesterday. But my son found it in the safe. I've got two copies: my son's copy—I sent a copy to all the Oklahoma legislators. I bought copies for all of them.

AW:

What's the title as it was printed?

GW:

Harvest of Rage and the Oklahoma City Bombing by Joel Dyer, and if you can't find a copy I'll get you a copy. I've got one.

AW:

I'll bet I can find one.

GW:

But he visited all these hate groups in Minnesota, the sovereign group in Texas, and he'd tell you stories—

AW:

Yeah. Republic of Texas?

GW:

He rode down in his motorcycle and went in and they put a gun on the table in front of him. And he talked to this guy, you know—Joel hadn't smoked cigarettes for ten years or better. He said, "You want a cigarette?" [Joel] says, "Sure." He says he's been smoking ever since. He went to start his car—yeah, he was in his car; he took his car, not his motorcycle—and they'd taken his distributor cap off of it so his car wouldn't start. They're all laughing and finally they put the distributor cap back on. But he stayed with that bunch. This group over here in eastern Oklahoma, he went out there, visited them. He went to visit the Skinheads, he visited—he knows more about Tim McVeigh than anyone, because he went over all his telephone calls and everything, after we had to include the bombing. He was on methamphetamines real bad.

AW:

Joel was?

GW:

No.

AW:

Oh, McVeigh.

GW:

McVeigh. And during the trial, Joel called me one night. He says, "They're going to subpoena you to come to Denver and testify." And I said, "Well—" Oh, the attorney from Houston called me. I can't remember his name. I want to say Oer but it's not Oer. Bush? Buttz? I don't know. Anyway, he called me and I said, "You know, you can call me for witness, but I'll give the worst testimony that you've ever had in the stand, because a lot of my friends died in that bombing." I work out at the Y, and some of my friends that worked over in those agencies were killed—one lady I was in the reserves with. Sergeant Mahusky died in that. A couple of women that worked out over there died in it. One of the guys that worked out was the head of the HUD. He got out alive. But anyway, then he called Burr—maybe his name was Burr—he says, "Then it came to the death penalty stage." And he was _____(??). He was more in that than he was in the other. And he says, "Will you testify on his death penalty thing?" And I said, "Absolutely not. I will if I have to. If I'm subpoenaed I don't have any choice, but I'll screw you up as bad as I can on the witness stand." He says, "Well, do you mind if I come by your house and just go through your material?" And I say, "You can do that if you want to. I have no problem with that." So he came by and landed here about ten o'clock—he got to the house. At four o'clock in the morning he left. But he went through all this stuff and took notes. But he still got the death penalty.

AW:

Yeah. Let me remind you that when we record this, this is for scholars to listen to from now for—we hope—for the next five hundred years. If you get to a spot that's sensitive about a patient that you don't want on the recording, tell me and I'll pause it. I'm not allowed to, for the obvious reasons of ethics and legality, alter a recording once it's made, but I can sure stop it if you've got something to talk about that's confidential. I thought I'd better remind you of that. Well, can we start with—since the women aren't going to be able to make this [interview today], we have a little bit more relaxed schedule and if we can—I'd like to know about Glen Wallace and I'd like to know how you got into all of this, and then we can talk about the crisis. I mean, you may have a question for me about what we're doing at Texas Tech with this information. I'd be glad to discuss that.

GW:

I just love what you're doing.

AW:

Great.

GW:

—for the next generations to come. The farmers [comprise] two percent of the population or less, and we don't really have any voter clout. The future generations need to know—I've got a saying in one of these books, one of these articles from William Jennings Bryan, that he says that you can bomb or destroy one of our cities, and it'll be rebuilt almost overnight. You destroy the farmland and the rural area, and look at the people out in Kentucky that—what is the name of that group or that cult up there that's been trying to—poverty—to overcome the poverty in a rural area takes maybe forty or fifty years.

AW:

Yeah, and the soil. It could take ten, twelve thousand years to replace soil that's abused. Well, let's start with when and where you were born, and is it G-l-e-n-n?

GW:

Just one *n*.

AW:

One *n*, and do you have a middle name or first name?

GW:

It's *k*. Middle initial *k*, Wallace.

AW:

And your date of birth.

GW:

Four ten thirty-two, 1932.

AW:

And where at? Where were you born?

GW:

I was born in Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.

AW:

Lone Wolf?

GW:

Yeah.

AW:

Where is Lone Wolf?

GW:

Well, it's closest to Hobart. It's between Hobart and Altus. And then I was raised in west Texas.

AW:

Where?

GW:

At Spring Lake, Texas. My dad—during the Dust Bowl, we were one of those that moved. When I was four years old, he lost his farm in Willow, Oklahoma, and he traded for some land out at Spring Lake, so of course we had irrigation water, and we raised potatoes. We had the sorriest old farm in Spring Lake—we had the lake of Spring Lake. (both laugh)

AW:

Well, right now you wouldn't have to worry about getting too much water in the lake.

GW:

But all those are old buffalo wallows, they go dry every year. But anyway—

AW:

But how—just a question—we typically think of irrigation really coming in after the Second World War, and this was before the war, right?

GW:

No, this was about 1938.

AW:

Yeah, so it was before the war. How was he irrigating? What kind of—

GW:

We had irrigation pumps.

AW:

And big gasoline motors?

GW:

Yeah, big gasoline motors, and we'd just take a barrel of gasoline and put a copper tube down in it, and that was our fuel tank. My brother was drafted and got shot—but he lived—in Okinawa.

The other was at Texas Tech working on his engineering degree. He was a civil engineer. My mother was a schoolteacher and my daddy was a life-long cotton farmer. They didn't take him into World War I because his brother was in, and they wouldn't take brothers then. And their dad had died with diabetes, so he was it with a lot of sisters, so he kept the family together. In 1919, he sold wheat for almost two dollars a bushel and paid off all the mortgages and his mother told him, says, "George, go down and buy you a new car." So he went down and bought him a new Model T. (laughs) But that was—wheat, there's a crisis about that cheap. But anyway, I was raised in West Texas, I graduated and then came back to Altus after they had to lower the wells out there. It got really expensive. You know, the aquifer kept going down, so they built a new dam at Altus.

AW:

Yeah, the aquifer was going down, and what year did you move back?

GW:

In 1945, I believe.

AW:

So the aquifer had already moved down enough that it was changing your irrigation patterns by 1945?

GW:

Yep. And my dad didn't want to spend that money. He figured he'd buy land where they was having this new dam built and have gravity-flow irrigation out of Lugert—it's Lake Altus or Lugert. So he bought land—he sold out out there. We bought land. My mother had always been a teacher. She was editor of the *Earth Sun—The Sit-Down Earth*. She edited the paper—did everything to make a living. Dad worked on the road between Littlefield and Spring Lake. He had those big old Prussian horses, you know, a Fresno. He'd work all day and come in at night and he had a World War II shell-shocked veteran named Arthur King. We called him King Arthur. He was an alcoholic, and he'd got mustard gas in World War I, but he basically raised us. My mother and dad were working all the time [so] he helped us. We did a lot of farming. We farmed with horses. We were the last farmers in Spring Lake to farm with horses. My dad said those tractors were going to ruin the land; they packed the dirt too tight. But anyway—of course he had boys to do the farming.

AW:

(laughs) Oh, that's right. I was going to say he didn't have to do it by himself.

GW:

But then we bought two 1938 Allis-Chalmers tractors, two rows. They were the first two tractors

we had and we farmed with those for years. My dad was a good farmer. He knew cotton. He could—in a wheat field, he'd go throw his hat out, and the wheat field would tell you how many bushels an acre it would make.

AW:

Really? What was the throwing his hat?

GW:

The way it sunk.

AW:

The way it sunk?

GW:

And looking for heads of wheat. He would go out and count the bowls on the cotton and tell you how much it would make: a quarter bale, a bale, three-quarters of a bale, bale and a half. And he said to make a bale of cotton, you had to have at least eighteen bowls on several stalks. But you'd see him in meddling around in the cotton field digging for moisture, taking the temperature of the ground to know when to plant cotton.

AW:

Well how'd he do when he moved back to Altus?

GW:

What?

AW:

How'd he do when he moved back to—

GW:

We did good. We purchased more and more land and good land. One day, well, in West Texas—let me tell you this story—during the war, my big brothers were gone, I was about ten—nine or ten years old—but Dad and I, we couldn't get any labor, we're trying to farm, and I would stay with the irrigation wells all—I'd never leave the field. Mother would bring my meals out all summer—and then one day he was trying to irrigate some wheat and it kept running to one side of the border, so I was digging a shell, trying to get it out of the way and it wouldn't do it, ditch broke. Dad came out there with a neighbor and he says, "Son, your water's getting away from you." I said, "I'll tell you one thing, Dad, if I ever get off this damn farm, you'll never see me on the farm again."

AW:

And how old were you?

GW:

I was about ten. But anyway, I don't know where I was going with that other than—

AW:

Well, we were talking about—

GW:

Then we moved to Altus. And we were picking—my mother was dragging my little sister on the back of her cotton sack—all of us were picking bowls—

AW:

I'm embarrassed to say I've been drug behind the cotton sack too. I wish I could find those old women and apologize for having ridden on the back of their cotton sack.

GW:

But anyway, this is the Mayfield Place. It's just a mile north of Blair. And I turned to my brother Andy and I said, "Andy, if I ever farmed again, I'd own this place right here. I wouldn't own anything else. It always has a good crop." Well, when I was working for the Department of Mental Health, my brother called me one day. He says, "Glen, you remember what you said when we were picking the cotton on Mayfield Place?" I said, "No" and he reminded me. He says, "It's for sale, because I'm out of money." And I said, "Well, I just sold some duplexes to the government for that freeway for Tinker Airbase." I said, "I've got a little money." He said, "Well, you can buy the Mayfield Place right now. It's worth the money." So I bought it. So that was my first farm, and now I've got nearly a thousand acres of cotton land and a thousand acres of pasture land.

AW:

All near Altus?

GW:

Yeah. The pasture and ranch bucks up against Quartz Mountain State Park and goes two miles towards Granite, and then my cotton land's all around Blair. I got—one full section and three half-sections. But I didn't take money, I just kept putting it back on the land, because I made a living with my profession.

AW:

Is that cotton land irrigated?

GW:

It's all irrigated.

AW:

From the impounded water in the lake?

GW:

Yes, which is dry now.

AW:

So what are you doing now? Are you doing dry land?

GW:

Well, yeah, we're planting cotton every year, and this year they told us we couldn't insure it for irrigated cotton, and so we were going to plant wheat. Well we planted wheat it all got froze. Meanwhile, they changed their ruling. We can have one more year where we have insurance on our cotton and claim the loss from the drought through insurance. So insurance saved us. We've shredded our cotton three years in a row.

AW:

Yeah.

GW:

You know, little old bowls—if you went to sell it, the staple was so short, it wouldn't bring anything. I mean, it's—my dad called it bumblebee cotton. He says a bumblebee sat on its butt and sucked the blossom.

AW:

(laughs) That's a great description, too.

GW:

But anyway, that's kind of my story. I got a doctorate from OU.

AW:

How did you get interested in the work that you're doing now? How did that come about? That's a—in some ways, is a fur stretch from cotton.

GW:

Yes. Well, probably under the influence of my mother. She's—

AW:

The teacher?

GW:

A teacher. Very bright lady. Very talented, musical and every other way. Writer. She did a lot of writing herself. She's written—gotten awards. You know, she got a whole house full of crystal one year from one of the articles she'd written.

AW:

Really? And she published these in magazines?

GW:

Yeah, and I got an article around here. She wrote an article years ago—I must get a copy of that for you—called “The Pioneer Woman” in the Mangham Star in the thirties. She was teaching out at Central View, which is out close to Russell, which is close to where they had their farm before they went to Texas. That article is just out of this world. “The Pioneer Woman” tells about what the women went through during the pioneer days. She talked about the rattlesnakes and dirt floors and all that stuff.

AW:

How much did she write—how many things did she write on that time period?

GW:

My sister would know. The one she broke the crystal over, I can't remember that—I can't remember what that's about. But my sister is ten years younger than I am. She was an accident, a wonderful accident.

AW:

Have these ever been published, other than in the magazines and newspapers?

GW:

Well, no, and the only article I've got left is down there in my cabin. She wrote one on my daddy's sister, her sister-in-law, who farmed as a woman through her eighties, driving a tractor, running Hereford cattle down there in Lone Wolf. But she's got a nice article about—her name was Hannah Isham. And it has a picture of Hannah in the article. I've got a whole—she was nominated for the Farm Woman of the State or something one year. My sister did a packet for her and it's got her history and some of the stuff she's done and all that.

AW:

Well, the reason I was asking is that I edited a series of books in the Texas Tech Press called *Voice in the American West*. It's a first-person voice so those kinds of stories might be interesting for a book, but if not, at Texas Tech Press, one of my dear life-long friends is the director of the OU Press. Either of those places might be interested in—

GW:

Some of her stuff?

AW:

Yeah, if it's written as you say and covers that time period there's—particularly from a woman's point of view—there's not enough out there for people to get a chance to read. When you're thinking about it next and collecting it all together, let's see if we can find—

GW:

After a while, I'll get on the website and try to get my sister to fax a copy of that one, the Pioneer Woman.

AW:

Or she can just e-mail a copy to me for me to look at.

GW:

We just got through—oh, she wrote an article in the Mangham. The Mangham Star took the article and printed it like last year, and they have a museum down there.

AW:

So your mom's a teacher. That's still a little bit different than psychology or psychiatry.

GW:

Well, I don't know. You know, most therapists get into it because they feel like they've got problems themselves. (laughter)

AW:

I know that's the stand-up line for the comedians.

GW:

I started out teaching as a principal in the Western Heights district here, and I coached. I coached a wrestling class in high school for a year when I got out of the Army, and I got more and more interested in kids working through their problems. So I started taking graduate work at OU, and I stayed with it until I got my doctorate and then I went to work at the state Department of

Education for eight years and wrote my dissertation on juvenile delinquency and juvenile behavior problems.

AW:

So this would have been about what year that you were doing this dissertation?

GW:

I finished it in 1968. I started it in about 1965, '64 or something.

AW:

So mid- to late-sixties.

GW:

Yeah.

AW:

I've got to stop and ask one question, though. Doctorate at OU and I noticed walking up you've got an OSU—

GW:

My loyalties are with them.

AW:

Did you do undergraduate work at OSU?

GW:

Yeah. I did my bachelor's at OSU. My master's and doctorate's from OU.

AW:

I'm just saying because—

GW:

What turned me sour was that was during the time that we had lots of this big business about communism. And at that time I guess I was redneck. I thought all of my professors—about half of them—were communists.

AW:

At OU?

GW:

At OU. I couldn't stand some of them. I just had to grin and bear it. You don't dare say anything. And I said, "If I ever get out of this place—these guys are teaching because they can't get a job in the public—" I mean, that was a bad attitude, but that was the attitude I had.

AW:

Well that's an argument made about a lot of college professors. (laughter)

GW:

But anyway, I got out of OU. OSU was my—it changed my life. It wasn't the doctorate or the stuff I did at OU. I'm talking about my feelings about myself and self-fulfillment.

AW:

OSU is a good university. And so is OU, but OSU—

GW:

I loved every minute up there. So I'm a dead-in-the-wool OSU fan.

AW:

And pardon me—when were you in the army? Were you in time for Vietnam? Were you not?

GW:

Well let me—it's a long story. At age seventeen, I joined the National Guard in Altus, and a Private E-1, a tank driver, of the 179th Infantry Regiment. And then I made the wheat harvest after I graduated—or maybe it was before I graduated—and I ended up in Pampa, Texas. And I worked for United Groceries part-time because I went to school with the Snell Boys. Their daddy owned the eighteen grocery stores.

AW:

Yeah, I know them well.

GW:

Henry Snell and Perry Snell and Jimmy Snell. Perry was my best friend. Perry and I always worked as a team, taking inventories. We'd set up outside the stores Saturday night and look through the plate glass. Cigarettes then were two dollars ninety-eight a carton, and you had to ring it up—because there was no tax on cigarettes then. You'd ring it up, and then instead of putting it on the register, you'd put a mark on a sheet of paper or something, otherwise I got two dollars over in my register. And after a while, you'd see them reach over, comb their hair and reach down, pull out a twenty out of the drawer and put it over in their purse. But we caught a lot of them, and we'd drill holes up above the freezer where they couldn't see us to catch shoplifters.

And we'd wait until they got outside. Perry's biggie was that a lot of these people had a lot of money, but they'd steal a lot of stuff like Longhorn cheese and stuff. Perry would just take their billfold and take all the money. He'd say, "I think that'll pay for all the stuff you stole. You can go on home now." He'd put the money in that old cash register—a hundred dollars, two hundred dollars.

Anyway, after that, I stayed in the Guard—oh, I was out in Pampa. And Cactus Jim Parrish had the Cactus Club in Altus. He was our battalion or company commander—battalion commander, I guess. I heard that it'd been mobilized to go to Korea. I called him and I said, you know, "Where do you want me to report, Major Parrish?" And he says, "Well Glen, says, about a month ago, or three weeks ago, I went out to your house, got all of your stuff from your mother, and I discharged you, so you just stay in Pampa, Texas." (laughs) Well, then I came home and enrolled in OSU and stayed in the Guard. Back then, you could be in the Guard and ROTC at the same time.

AW:
Really?

GW:
So I was a sergeant first-class one day, and the next day, I was a second lieutenant. I was commissioned at ROTC at OSU, and then I went to Fort Reilly and served the first division at Forty Reilly from active duty and then came back. I took an early out. The Korean thing had wound down. I took an early out with the twelve-year reserve obligation. Well, I ended up being in the ninety-fifth division for about twenty-five years. Anyway, I retired with thirty four years—good service years—as a bird colonel, commander of second brigade down at Lawton. Took a long time, but I—I'm doing a thing for November eleventh. I'm taking all the vets here and getting their war stories and going to publish them for a little booklet for November eleventh. And I've been busy doing that the last—I got to meet with them in the morning again.

AW:
Oh, cool.

GW:
But anyway, that was a big part of my life, too.

AW:
Yeah, thirty-four years.

GW:
But anyway, I was national champion—I was always a good shooter—and I was national champion of the Leach Cup in the national matches.

AW:

Is this a rifle?

GW:

Rifle. High-fired rifle. I won the thousand-yard match, army-issued rifle, M-14, armed sights, no scope, at a thousand yards, with all of them in the bull's eye and thirteen in the in the B-ring.

AW:

Well, that's good. I was in police work twelve years and we didn't do high-powered rifled but we did our pistols, and I'm here to tell you, I know how hard it is to get a cluster.

GW:

Well, back to my war experience, I shot on the old-army rifle team for several years. You know, you have to shoot your way up every year. Fifth army, and then you have to shoot—you have to start from your division to army and then they select you for the all-army team. Well, we would spend four weeks at Fort Benning before we went to the national matches, and we trained snipers for Vietnam while we was there. And they came up with this new range-finder scope that when you set the focus, it sets the elevation where you want it, and then all you have to do is—highly classified back then; I know they got better stuff now—all you have to do is figure the wind out, and the mirage and all that stuff, and the light—all the things that affect a round. Anyway, that's probably my greatest contribution to the—I didn't serve overseas. I'm really not a veteran, because, you know. But anyway, that's my story.

AW:

So you get your degree—your doctorate—and you finish your dissertation on juvenile delinquency at a time when there's a lot of attention being given to that because of the riots going on. I was a cop at the time, so I remember the interest, the scholarly interest. What were you doing in a practice that would involve that?

GW:

Well, I was—I headed up—they had a position in the State Department of Education called Juvenile Behavior Problems, and I headed up that division. I worked with juvenile judges, that sort of thing. And then when I did my dissertation, I took the most problematic kids in Tulsa from the worst—the most problem schools down in Greenwood, down in that area in Tulsa—I flipped a coin. I took three-hundred and sixty [kids] and flipped a coin to see where the kid would go: control group or experimental group, based on the age, race, sex and grade. Then the experimental group—we would not allow them to be expelled. We'd put them in supervised study. And we did group therapy back then. It was Glasser stuff, reality therapy, which is kind of like cognitive behavior therapy now.

AW:

If I remember correctly, group therapy was a pretty new thing.

GW:

Yeah, it was. But it worked. The mirror effect, you know. This guy won't talk about his problems, this guy over here talks about it.

AW:

That's me.

GW:

Oh, I process that. They start processing that stuff.

AW:

Right. I teach a songwriting class at Texas Tech. Kids never do understand why I want them to sing their song in front of other people and talk about it, but it's exactly the same reason. If you have a problem with your writing and you're not going to talk about it, but you see it in someone else, you learn a lot from it. Well, so how does your control group do that was not expelled?

GW:

They did well. Several things came out of the dissertation. One was that behavior—changing behavior in the classroom will raise the grade point from a D to a C or a C to a B, just by changing their behavior. Bringing a pencil and piece of paper to class. That was the main thing. I can't remember some of the others, but it made a difference in their test scores in reading, and then a guy got his dissertation out of that. Carl Pride—he's also from Altus—Dr. Pride, he was teaching in Houston. Houston, University of—I don't know which it is. But he took my stuff and took it on to another level and just did the academic part of it—the findings. And I did an extension of a—can't remember his name—a doctor in the Department of Education that moved to Idaho. He studied grade school kids that were predicted to be real behavior problems as they grew older. And he studied them, and I took—some of that same population was in my experimental group and control group. So I started my dissertation after him and then mine was followed by Dr. Pride—Carl Pride. So anyway, that kind of got me into it, and then coaching kind of got me into behavior stuff. I had a kid that also—I was head wrestling coach, head track coach and assistant football coach in class. I didn't know much about track. I had this one Native American kid called Pushmatahaw Lester. He could run like a deer.

AW:

Can you say his first name again?

GW:

Pushmatahaw. (laughter) Well, I carried him around. You know, if you got a good racehorse you carry him around the country, and I carried Pushmatahaw everywhere. But he'd lose races because when the gun would go off, he'd jump straight up.

AW:

Oh, instead of—

GW:

He could not—so I had kids stand up in ropes at different heights and he'd look for the smoke in the gun, not the sounds. But I had a lot of fun with Pushmatahaw. I don't know whatever happened to that kid, but he could run like a deer. Anyway, he was—you know, human behavior's been a great interest of mine from the very beginning.

AW:

If you think you've got it figured out, just wait.

GW:

Yeah. But it can be changed. You see, if behavior can't be changed, then I'm out of business. We're wasting our time. We're wasting our time, if we can't change behavior.

AW:

So did you go into practice with juveniles? With children?

GW:

Yeah, I worked for—after I left the state Department of Education I worked for the guidance centers, the state guidance center, and set up a couple of guidance centers, one right out here in Wheatland. And then I went from there—where'd I go next? I was the psychologist for a regional lab, one of those education regional labs. I had all these schools: Bethany, Okarche, Yukon, Union City, Piedmont, Calumet. I was psychologist, child psychologist, basically for—and that was really my major emphasis. And then I did that for about three or four years, and then I went—where'd I go next? I went into—I was a great friend of Governor Hall, the reason being, during my dissertation he was district attorney in Tulsa and he'd do anything in the world for our kids. Got them in the inaudible Ranch Day Parades, riding donkeys and stuff, helped us organize our own softball team, got us memberships at the Y. He and I just became like this. If I needed anything in Tulsa, I'd go to the D.A. So when he became governor, he says, "Glen, you're going to work for me." So I worked for the Office of Economic Opportunity. We'd have rent-a-hog. You'd put twenty hogs in a little space, have a lily pond at the end, you have poor people—we started a grape farm.

AW:

So people would rent a hog?

GW:

Yeah. (laughs)

AW:

Now do they get to sell the hog or did the hog have piglets?

GW:

Yeah they got to sell the hog.

AW:

So this was kind of like an FFA program but for grownups?

GW:

Yes. And then we had rent-a-cow.

AW:

Oh, wow.

GW:

They could rent a cow and sell the calf when it got old enough. But we did a lot of stuff for just poor people.

AW:

Yeah. What year would that have been?

GW:

That would have been about 1971.

AW:

You know, it's just interesting because of the international programs now where you can give money so that you can buy somebody a cow or a pig, you know, as a way of foreign aid that doesn't go through the government. And you were ahead of the curve on that.

GW:

And then during that time the OSHA bill was passed by the federal government. The governor said, "You're going to head up a group to deal with labor and deal with industry and write a law for Oklahoma." Every state had to have their own law. So I spent two years doing that and that

was interesting.

AW:

Oh yeah I would imagine.

GW:

Talk about human behavior— get these two guys to sit down together.

AW:

And how did you ever come out of that with any friends? (laughs) Because that OSHA seems to be such a contentious point no matter what position—

GW:

Well here's a political secret: Governor Hall was raised in Oklahoma City. His wife and another lady were airline stewardesses together. Her husband was Walter Price, who he also knew in Tulsa, and their dad had been Mayor of Tulsa at one time. Walter Price had gone to West Point, been in Vietnam, came back, and the governor called one day and he says, "Now I've never told you, Glen, who to hire." But he said—and he told me about this story. This is a lieutenant colonel, retired—Vietnam, and he says, "I sure would like for you to hire him." So I interviewed Walter Price and of course I hired him, but what a blessing. He was the key to what you're saying, getting these two groups to work together. He had a good mind in dealing with people, and he was much better at it than I was. And it wasn't me, it was Walter Price that really made the difference. So all political appointees are not bad. (laughter) He's a great man. He went on to be head up the central purchasing agency and he ended up working for the bank and he still lives in Stillwater. I hope he's still alive. I haven't had any contact with Walter for years. I used to stop by his house after games.

But anyway—they could commit a crime starting in Texas County and go all the way to Choctaw County and there was no record of their crimes, like stealing stuff, stealing copper, whatever they did—their expertise was in crime. And there was no tracking, so we set up—we called it an OBTS, Offender Based Tracking System—which would be statewide. It had to do with getting the court clerks to start submitting data and we automated that system. And we set up a system and we did it in the office of the governor I think. And then we transferred it to OSBI, and it's the original system where we could track all our felons, just felons. And the first thing you know, the judge's jumped on to us because they started using the data to run for office. During his administration he lost so many cases, you know, and the court's got all of those. But we took the court data and made it confidential. A lot of it was confidential. Of course, adolescent stuff was confidential.

But anyway, did three years on that and then went to work—a lot of federal money. And I went back to work for the State Department of Education for a little while—I can't remember. But anyway, I ended up working for the Mental Health Department writing grants during the Johnson

Administration. We got grants for the Methadone Clinic for Heroin Addicts and a model of Gestalt Treatment in Tulsa where it's halfway-house type stuff—hair-cutter type stuff. And then we had a street program sale center here for NA [Narcotics Anonymous], and I believe that's the three models we had. And it ended up that then the Legislature jumped on to us because we had young people that would take pencil erasers and make drug tracts. You come in and they'd been shooting heroin, and they'd get on the methadone program. Well, the legislators voted to shut that down. At that time, I was running the methadone program at the old hospital, Hubbard Hospital on Bath Street in Northeast Oklahoma City, and so we detoxed one hundred and seventy-nine meth addicts and the law let us keep those career criminals that had been on the methadone program. I think we had seventeen that the judges let us keep on methadone. The rest of them we just kicked them off. Well, we detoxed them but not very well. So they went to Fort Worth, they went to Albuquerque. Basically we shipped them all—

AW:

Yeah, some other place.

GW:

(laughs) But then we set up a new program under a private contractor. And Dr. Burell had just come back from Vietnam, an M.D. and a psychiatrist. And they [the addicts] had to go before—to get on the program, had to go before a law enforcement officer, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, and maybe a nurse, I can't remember. And they had to go before this committee before they could get on. And then when they came on, they gave them their milligrams. You know you come on fifty milligrams, give them five milligrams of methadone. And you'd give them a zero date. You'll be off by this date. So we didn't tell them they'd end up on placebos down toward the end.

AW:

So you'd have them really zero-out a lot sooner?

GW:

Yeah. But then, now that's been trashed and you know methadone is used in hospitals and a little bit everywhere else. They still use it for heroin addicts to get them off of it. Methadone was admitted or processed as a pain killer by Hitler, by the Germans, because they ran out of morphine during the war. And it was introduced in this country by Richard Nixon back when we had all these drugstore robberies, stealing drugs. And I forget what they called that program. DuPont headed it up. A special program. That's where all the money came down for this methadone. So it was invented by Hitler and introduced in this country by Nixon and it did get them off the drugs pretty well. I've worked with heroin addicts who say, you know—the old timers say, I can't drive by a car yet that has a medical sign on the tag, and I'll shoot the circle and look over in the car and see if he has a bag in there. See I just automatically do that. I just

keep doing it. Or I'll drive by a drugstore and look at the roof.

AW:

And see how easy it is to get in.

GW:

(laughs) But anyway I did that, and then what did I do? I went to work for the Crime Commission and that was fiscal analysis. That's where that was. That wasn't the governor's office. From the Crime Commission we hired a new commissioner called Frank James. Long story, trying to make it as short as I can. The federal government came out with a mandate, however you do that, that you couldn't keep the elderly in mental hospitals because it is not the free society when they'd be maintained in nursing homes or outside of it. You can't keep them; you can't take their freedom away from them. So we had to empty out—like at Western State, I went out there. The commissioner sent me out there. Their budget was I think seventeen million dollars. Most of it was federal money, with these old people playing dominoes in the Berry building, or the other building. We had six wings of elderly out there. Been there for years. Well we placed them. All those in nursing homes besides a psychiatrist nurse to visit, all of them were, we placed them. And our budget went from seventeen million to seven million in two years. Our staff went from four hundred to two hundred and something. Our population went from about five or six hundred down to about a hundred and eighty. And I can't go to Woodward County even today. Oh they hated me. We found everybody jobs with other state agencies. They could transfer but no one was turned out in the street. But Texas didn't do that, so the court took over their mental health system. Missouri didn't do that. They [the court] took over the mental health system. We were one jump ahead of that and we got ours out. And of course they've developed mental health centers that are supposed to take care of them around the country.

AW:

What year would that have been roughly?

GW:

Nineteen seventy-eight through about nineteen eighty, something like that.

AW:

So you had your hands full with that going on while the American Ag Movement was really in its heyday, which they had their tractorcade in '79 to Washington. Did you have any connection with that protest movement?

GW:

I was the Deputy Commissioner for the Western side of Oklahoma. All the mental health centers and hospitals. And the farm crisis came—well, we had the killing at the post office in Edmond.

And I headed up—

AW:

And what was the killing at the post office in Edmond?

GW:

Oh, it was a guy that walked in the post office, and he had been fired or something—I can't remember his name—and he killed twenty-two—I don't know, a bunch of people at the post office. Just shot them all up.

AW:

That was one of the early postal killings, correct?

GW:

Yeah. Well then following that, we had the farm crisis and Dr. James says, "As Western Regional Deputy Commander you will, if anyone—"

Ruth Wallace (RW):

Good morning. I'm Ruth.

AW:

Hi, Ruth.

RW:

Glad to have you here.

AW:

Thank you. It's so nice to see you.

RW:

Now don't let me interrupt.

AW:

All right.

GW:

We had a hotline run by a kid by the name of Mike Lowther.

RW:

Oh, are you recording?

AW:

Yeah, that's okay. No worries. We are glad to have you recorded too, Ruth.

GW:

But anyway, this hotline would take the suicide calls.

AW:

In the late seventies?

GW:

For mental health, yeah.

AW:

Any kind of suicide calls?

GW:

Any kind. And then we started having all these farm calls and so Dr. James put out a mandate that I would become the Rural Mental Health Specialist and that any call we get, I would either get somebody on site or I would go myself.

AW:

That's a lot of territory. (laughs)

GW:

I know. Well you know we've got mental health centers scattered all over.

AW:

But I mean, if you had to go make them—

GW:

I ended up making a lot of them. But I incorporated Mona Lee, who headed up the Ag-Link Hotline.

AW:

Okay, so how did you get to know Mona Lee and how did she fit into this?

GW:

Well when I got that job I connected up with the other hotline. We had two hotlines. And it was obvious that the farm crisis would come through the farm hotline because the American

Agriculture Movement was out there—

AW:

Putting that number out, yeah.

GW:

There's help. There's Willie Nelson's money. You get kicked off your land, you get food stamps. Willie Nelson will get your groceries. All kinds of stuff. And she worked for the Conference of Churches and the building down on Northwest 34th, they had a _____ (??) with a conference of churches and she was one of the staff members, but she was good. And she had just lost her husband. He died in her arms after they were pushed off of their land. And so it was a total commitment as far as she was concerned. So Mona Lee and I, we did our work basically full time, and then I went out to be a director of a mental health center at Chisolm Trail but I still was a psychologist for the Hot Lake Wildlife, and I went to several other places. I was the director of the mental health center in Lawton for a while but I still did the backup calls. That was after Dr. James was gone. You know, we just kept it going with Willie Nelson money. And anyway, after that, Mona Lee went to work as a therapist for the Ardmore Center. She'd lived in Medill for a long time. That was where she was from originally. I went to work as a prison psychologist and I worked there seventeen years. Well, I started out as a contractor for the corrections doing group therapy, cognitive group therapy, and teaching facilitators for group therapy, and then I went on the payroll. I just retired November before last, on November the second, and on November third I had been contacted by a mental health outfit here at Beacon Point. I said, "Ruth I'm going to go talk to these people about a job," and she said, "I'm going to call and tell him there's a seventy-nine-or-something-year-old idiot out there—eighty-year-old—that's looking for a job." (laughter)

RW:

Retires one day, takes a new job the next. (laughter)

GW:

But anyway, I had thirty-two patients and I was driving, turning in a payroll last November and I got pain in my side, and I drive by the hospital instead of the emergency room. And I thought, Well, I have appendicitis and it's bad, and I whipped in there. I had had some other cancer problems, and I said, "Lord, you know how I hate emergency rooms. Just give me a good doctor and take care of this appendicitis." Went in and it was beautiful. They gave me the best doctor in Oklahoma City, Chris Davis. He says, "You've got a cancer in your colon about the size of a lemon."

AW:

Oh my goodness.

GW:

But he says, "I can zap that right out of there and it's no big deal." And I said, "Good." So I come out and he cut me from here all the way down to here. And I said, "What happened? He said, "Well, I got in there"—and I had adhesion surgery a few years ago—and he said, "They messed that up. I had to clean that up. I saw I had to do that, and I cut out your appendix—it wasn't bad—took out twelve inches of your colon," and he says, "I took out twelve lymph nodes and had them checked to see if they were cancerous. I looked at your liver—"

AW:

You just got a major overhaul.

GW:

He says, "I was in there over three hours puttering around." And he says, "You don't have to take any chemotherapy; I got everything."

AW:

This is last November?

GW:

Yeah.

AW:

Well you look great for last November. I mean, I'd still be limping around. (laughs)

GW:

Well I do a lot of limping around. Working yesterday, I've been doing volunteer work dealing a little bit with the elderly in the nursing home and they don't have access to mental health treatment. You know, independent living, assisted living and nursing homes have doctors and they think they're psychiatrists. But some of those decisions are very bad, and they just let them get psychotic and get psychotic. But anyway, when I left the agency the head therapist there at Beacon Point started their own agency. I said, "I'll just give my thirty-two patients to you," and so she transferred those patients over to start her company. Now, but they're all over town. These retirement centers are all here in a row. I said, "You know, I'll just try to get a deal." So we were trying to get approved, she and I and some others, for insurance, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and we get Medicare/Medicaid. So we're starting in a few weeks, just going into retirement centers and saying, Hey, you got help? Do you need a referral? You know, we do on-site. We'll come to the home or the center of skilled nursing or wherever it is and provide services. So we had a meeting all afternoon yesterday, kind of winding that up. So we're going to start contacting the nursing homes. I called the directors way back there and they don't even know what's going on, most of

them. But the director of nursing—some of it is social workers, others it's different people that really head up the mental health issues. So that's the people we'll visit with. So outside of that, I've got to do Bible study tomorrow night—no, Friday night. Our daughter is arriving this evening from Florida. We've got a great-grandbaby that's being baptized this weekend.

AW:

How many children do you have?

GW:

Four. (laughs)

RW:

Ten grandchildren.

AW:

Oh my goodness. How many great-grandchildren?

GW:

Two.

AW:

I've just got two grandchildren and they wear me out. I can't imagine ten. I don't know if I could—

RW:

Well, they live other places. We never have them all at once.

GW:

They're scattered from Florida to Michigan.

AW:

So what do your children do?

GW:

Becky's arriving here. She's the oldest. She's married to a D.O. at Treasure Island, Florida. He has a clinic. She's a speech therapist and does pottery professionally—you know, a real potter. She took it as a side course up at OSU and she's been a potter for years. Great at it. And then the next one is Craig, our son. He's been managing the ranch and the cattle and he's getting up in years. What is Craig, fifty-six now?

AW:

Managing your place?

GW:

Yeah, the ranch part.

RW:

And he works for the Department of Corrections.

GW:

And he's working the Department of Corrections. And last year we put everything in an LLC. Ruth and I don't own anything but these cars out here and this shirt I got. (laughter) But we don't have all those bills anymore. So anyway, it's a big relief for him. We sold all of our cattle last month.

AW:

So are you leasing it out or is it—?

GW:

We're leasing it out. The same guy that leases all our cotton—he's a nephew. My brother Andy's boy—

RW:

He's the best farmer in Jackson County.

GW:

Yeah he's a good farmer, he and his boys. And they're managing everything now. Then our next daughter is Carol Dyer, and they just moved here from Florida. He went to work for Devon. He's got a doctorate in Industrial Psychology. I guess that's what you call it. But he's worked for Dow Chemical and he worked for Devon. Devon downsized and moved the Houston office out here so he's writing a book right now. He's just written one—do we have a copy of it? Will you show him?

RW:

I don't.

GW:

Anyway it's a great book I think.

RW:
Spiritual.

GW:
Anyway, she's a physical therapist, and she's a wonderful—she wanted to do since she was a kid was just be a physical therapist.

AW:
Really? That's great.

GW:
And then the next daughter is—

RW:
Julie.

GW:
Julie. She's got a degree in Hospital Administration and she's married to an M.D., a hospitalist in—well he was in Grand Rapids, now he's in Kalamazoo. His father was a doctor in Midland, Michigan. He's dead now. He started there and he may go back to Midland. He's thinking about that now. But I think he's kind of tired of the hospitalist duties. But Medicare broke him. When he went out of practice before, they owed him like ninety thousand dollars or something and he never got his money. So anyway, and we've got a granddaughter that's a physician's assistant, Becky's oldest daughter. She'll be here today. Our other daughter, Evy, has got the grandbaby who's going to be baptized, and her husband is a urologist at Baptist Hospital. He does this robot surgery stuff.

AW:
Oh my goodness, yeah. It's all in the news right now.

RW:
You forgot about the three Haitian orphans that our youngest daughter has.

GW:
The one in Michigan, she was a single mother for a long time, and her daughter is twenty-two or twenty-three. And she got a son by her husband that's a hospitalist. He's about eleven. And then they adopted three Haitian kids. (laughs) So that increased our grandkids by three.

AW:
Yeah. All at once.

GW:

The youngest one is six today right?

RW:

Yeah.

AW:

You've got them scattered but at least you have some of them close by.

GW:

Yeah. Now Carol and I go to the farm every Wednesday, most every Wednesday. Go down there and we do lots of stuff with the land—projects.

RW:

Spreading seeds. Spreading seeds.

GW:

Over-seed, by a four-wheeler. We thought the last place was full of cactus, really a junk place. But it had some good bottom land—river land that we could farm. But we're trying to get rid of the cactus, get rid of the mesquites. We just spent thirty-three thousand dollars building a channel on a cliff. There's a big state pond; it's on Highway 6 over there. The guy that owned it before, he made seventeen thousand dollars selling dirt, clay. Well there's a pit there—it's about a football field long or longer and forty foot deep—and I'm trying to fill that up so we can irrigate out of it to irrigate that bottom land. I couldn't wait on conservation services. It takes forever to get your money and then you have to pay half or three-fourths of it anyway. I thought, Well, we got a little money now and I'll just spend it if we ever get any rain. We haven't had any rain down here.

AW:

Yeah and when are we going to? That's the question.

GW:

So that's kind of the story.

AW:

Well you mentioned in the story how you met Mona Lee Brock. How about Wilma Dorman?

GW:

She was one of our clients that helped us with—

AW:

Thank you so much. (glasses clinking)

RW:

You want a warm-up on your coffee?

AW:

I'd love some coffee.

GW:

Would you like some yogurt with that or anything?

AW:

No, this will be just fine.

RW:

Do you like cream cheese with your banana nut bread?

AW:

No, I'm a banana nut bread purist. (laughter)

RW:

Well, as you wish.

GW:

Well, Mona Lee—Wilma Dorman, we followed her. You know, her husband was in great stress, being pushed off their land. And the bankers worked against them and wouldn't give them a loan. If they had given them a small loan they could've maybe made it. "No we're not going to give you a loan." FSA could—these farmers in trouble, once they challenged them in any way, they'd write "bad faith."

AW:

Bad faith?

GW:

Bad faith meant they could do anything they wanted to to that farmer.

RW:

Cream or sugar?

AW:

No ma'am, just plain.

GW:

And that was the way they pushed them off the land. In other words, they could force them to sell their property. Some of these agents went back and bought their properties, got invested. I mean it just turned into a tyranny.

AW:

Thank you so much.

RW:

You're not going to want this.

GW:

Once they wrote the word "bad faith" it turned out to be tyranny for the farmers.

AW:

Yeah. Well, has there been a study, a documentation of that kind of behavior on the part of the FSA?

GW:

No. We had one FSA officer down at Mariana. The farmer came in, and he's already suicidal. At one point he said, "You're such a bad farmer, I would kill myself if I was you." I mean this is supposedly a professional. You know, the two were shot up in Iowa—the lenders. So they asked Mona Lee and I to do a workshop for workers. So we did one in Wichita, Kansas—an all day workshop—and basically what we said was that the purpose of the workshop—we could have titled it "There's a Nice Way to Say No and There's an Ugly Way to Say No." And we advised them about it. You know, offer them a cup of coffee. Greet them when they come in the door. If they seem to be out of control or over-anxious, you don't take a pencil and look out the window when they're talking. You look them right in the eye, you don't be shuffling paper and all that sort of thing, and listen to their story. You leave the door open. You don't close the door. And you give them as much empathy as you can. And after they get through you tell them what you have to tell them by your rules, but you do it nicely. "I know you've taken a lot of stress out of this, and I know you brought your kids home from college. I know your wife has cancer," you know, "but this is what we've got to do."

But anyway, I hope it helped, because some of these guys were just like Gestapo. You know, "I've got the power. I can take your farm if I want to." And one of them has been Commissioner of Agriculture up here, one of those guys, Jerry Peach. You see his name in the paper all the

time. He pushed more people off their land up around Woodward than anyone around, and he's a big shot now. So in some counties, we had more federal agriculture workers than we had farmers, after they got through pushing them off the land. Of course you take Texas County that has a population of five thousand—all those three counties up there are less than five thousand population. So they don't need all these federal workers, but a lot of them made a lot of profit out of the farm crisis is the bad thing. Some of them—I don't know very many of them that were nice.

AW:

The federal workers you're talking about?

GW:

I'm talking about the Farm Agency workers, local. ACS workers.

AW:

And they made money off the crisis?

GW:

Oh yeah.

AW:

And they did that by acquiring the land?

GW:

Acquiring the land or taking care of their friends, working with a bankruptcy judge. Lawyers made all kinds of money. Everybody profited from the farm crisis—professionals and government employees. They had nothing to worry about. And then in Joel's book, in *The Harvest of Rage*, I made the statement in there that the U.S. Department of Agriculture Inspector General is a farce because he's heading back through the channels of the same people who pushed him off the land, and I got a letter from the Inspector General's office after the book was published. He said, "That's not true." But it is true. I said, "I'll give you some people's names if you want them." I gave him about ten or fifteen names and never heard any more about it. You know, they're still hurt, and they got no help. They were treated wrong and no one would help them. No one. I told them they were completely disenfranchised. There was no help except the hotline to keep them from killing themselves. Try to get them into alcohol treatment. Try to get them to work through the domestic violence stuff, the depression. The key to all that is that personal depression and community during the farm crisis are similar. The community acts like a depressed person. They stopped being on the boards. Some of them stopped going to church. Some of them stopped going to the coffee shop. They don't feel comfortable.

AW:

And then the community as a whole—

GW:

And then the community a whole starts going down just like a depressed person. So if you took the two—

AW:

You're familiar I'm sure with Boise City?

GW:

Yes.

AW:

And Stratford, Texas? You know, I was part of a Dust Bowl re-photography project where some of our graduate students took old iconic photographs from the Dust Bowl and we went back into that same spot and took another photograph. Two things that really struck me: one was that this was after the book *The Worst Hard Times* had just come out, and there weren't many fans of that book in the Oklahoma Panhandle. Their point was, what about those of us who stayed? But the other thing that struck me was in walking—I take my morning walks in the community, getting up before we do our work—you could tell how the farmers were doing by walking around the community. One thing you'd notice—the first thing, and I started looking for this in each town we'd go to—were there signs in the front yard, “My student is a Jackalope,” or “My student is a Tiger,” or things showing their involvement in the school district and the school teams. And if there were those signs in that community, a lot of them, nobody parked in the front yard, you didn't find lots very often with weeds and rubbish, there was less plywood downtown. I mean, it was just an incredible parallel between those things. And I think what you've just described is that: the depressed community versus a community that's not depressed.

GW:

Yes. It's just amazing how people can—back to where we started—you know, their glories are faded. It goes back to Williams Jennings Bryan. Has it been fifty years since the Dust Bowl?

AW:

Well, sixty, seventy—actually it started in 'thirty-two.

GW:

Another example is the Cumberland Gap people we talked about. They spent thousands and millions, probably, of dollars, trying to get these people to improve their quality of life and it just goes—they just stay in trailer houses. You know, they just have their old junker cars. But that

came out of poverty. Archaeologists say, you know, that's what happens. It takes years and years and years for that to evolve. And here we are, maybe eighty years later, and it still hasn't changed.

AW:

Right. And we were just talking about two examples. Stratford counts as the Oklahoma Panhandle; it's close enough. But Texoma and Boise City—my grandmother grew up in Texoma, and I have friends whose grandparents grew up in Boise City. In the turn of the last century, around 1900, between 1900 and the Dust Bowl, those were two of the most powerful cities in the region. Their banking was in Texoma and Boise City. Even into the 1950s, there was a really important dress shop in Boise City that had lasted all that time. And now you go to those two older, powerful cities and they're in terrible straights. And the younger, new, smaller towns like Dalhart—well Dalhart has a whole story of its own, but Stratford and other towns that are coming up really highlight the difference between these old towns that were really struck by the Dust Bowl and the Depression and like you said, like Bryan said, have not recovered.

Are there records that exist on these hotline calls?

GW:

Yeah. Let me start—let me go to the bathroom first.

AW:

Yeah that's a good idea. I'm going to pause this, but I'm not going to pause this before I say, is it Ruth or Ruth Anne?

RW:

Ruth.

AW:

That's really good banana bread.

RW:

Oh thank you.

[Pause]

AW:

There's no telling.

GW:

You're not diabetic, are you?

AW:

No, but I'm just trying to get control of my health. I've noticed that—I'm a musician too, and—

RW:

Oh, you are? What do you play?

AW:

Guitar, and I write songs and plays and in fact—

RW:

Oh, you and my son-in-law would get along.

AW:

What is your son-in-law's name?

RW:

Paul Dyer. He just does it for the fun of it.

GW:

He's the one that's in industrial psychology.

RW:

Plays the guitar, wrote the book.

AW:

Well when I go back out to the van I'm going to get you a record album I did a couple years back about the Dust Bowl and the time since the Depression and the farm problems and so forth.

But I was looking around at all the people my age that are in the best condition, especially the ones who are musicians and have had a hard life, and every one of them is a vegetarian.

(laughter) So for the last year and going on fourteen months now I haven't fallen off the wagon except when I was forced to by someone saying you've got to have—

RW:

Lots of discipline.

AW:

It does. And I grew up on a farm and we ate vegetables all the time so that's not the problem. The problem is finding it, you know, when you're traveling. But I do feel a lot better. And I do eat the eggs and cheese but—

RW:

You've got to have a little protein.

AW:

Oh yeah. You've got to be careful about that. In any case, we didn't need all that—hearing about my health issues on the recording. But there it is. We've just started a second recording because we stopped for a moment and I had to put batteries in. This is Andy Wilkinson still with Glen Wallace, his wife Ruth, at their home, continuing our interview that began an hour and half or so ago. It's the eighth of May, 2013. We're here in Oklahoma City. So when we took a break I had asked about any documentation of the hotline calls. Because this whole story about the bad faith notations and the lack of help—in fact, not just a lack of help, but the converse: active enemies on the part of the people who are supposed to help them. That's an interesting story.

GW:

Here's letters written to the hotline, and the American Agriculture Movement was involved in soliciting the letters. And from those letters—and that may be the last copy I have. Now you're welcome to them, because I can't keep—

AW:

It would be hard to make copies of these I think. They've been water damaged and they're copies themselves and so they're a little bit dark, but yes, we'd love to—

GW:

Well they're yours.

AW:

Okay.

GW:

And then, following that—

RW:

This is an article from the New York Times.

GW:

Yeah, this is a lady that was a friend of Mona Lee's, and a friend of their neighbor was Jack Bowell that I went to OSU with. I've got a better copy somewhere.

AW:

Well we can find it. If it's on the New York Times and it's got a date, then yes we can find it.

GW:

But this lady—things got so bad, them being pushed off the land, that she started a big bonfire out back and threw herself on the fire.

AW:

Oh my goodness.

GW:

But the main thing I wanted to show you and give you—I think this is my last copy but I've given stuff to the English and the Germans and everybody else that wanted to document some stuff. This right here is the best documentation I think you can find. If I can find the end of it. Governor Belmont—it was so bad that he called for public hearings about the farm crisis. And so Mona Lee and I had these seminars—and what's that, 1989?

AW:

Yes

GW:

And these are the tapes of those hearings where the farmers got up and talked about—

AW:

Oh, these are the transcripts of those?

GW:

The transcripts of those hearings.

AW:

Oh, these are terrific.

GW:

Oh, no, I've got some other stuff in there. That doesn't—

AW:

This is a list of—

GW:

Yeah. I got junk on top of that. Didn't mean to pick it up. Somewhere in here the Governor's hearings start.

AW:

Yeah I think they're right here.

GW:

Yeah, Tahlequah I think was the first one.

RW:

Belmont was the first one.

GW:

And I think this goes on top of it. I believe that's right. But there you hear the farmers talk themselves. They tell their story over there, what's going on in their community—

AW:

Do you know where the tapes for these exist, if they do?

GW:

Mona Lee might know. It was sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, and one of the deans down at Western State at Altus—his dad's a former senator. His name is Kerr, and I'm trying to think of his first name. He's not one of the senator's family. But he headed this up with us. He was Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture at the time. He's got a brother, Robert Kerr, and his name is—he's with the college at Altus. His name is Kerr, and I'll think of his first name here in a minute. Anyway, he would know where the tapes are.

AW:

It would just be nice to have a complete package saved somewhere. You know, in case we're missing a page or something here. But this is great. This is a huge stack of transcripts.

GW:

See Joel went through those, writing his book. He went through the letters, he went through—I sent him all kinds of stuff along the way.

AW:

Where is Joel now?

GW:

Well it's kind of interesting. Joel left as Editor of the *Boulder Weekly* and started out on his own, writing and taking pictures. He did photographs himself for magazine covers and sent them to New York or wherever, I don't know. He and his wife—but in that process, he ended up owing some back taxes to IRS. Quite a large sum. He'd been in oil. His brother is my son-in-law, Paul. So Paul said, "We've got to help Joel out." He got Joel on the computer to find out where the best place [was and to] do the research to start a weekly newspaper, because the dailies are going out. And at the time he was living in Longmont, Colorado, and so he came up with a university town with a large population without a decent weekly. It turned out to be Fort Collins, Colorado, right down the road. So Joel and I and Paul started a newspaper. (laughter)

AW:

How long ago?

GW:

Well, about five, six years ago. I put in fifty thousand dollars and then we had some money calls, and we got some old federal surplus property two-by-fours and made an office in downtown Fort Collins, and we'd do fine during the year until it got to December. From December to March, we always went in the hole, and we'd have to have money calls to pay the staff. But he used a lot of the kids from Fort Collins—from Colorado State—to help. Anyway, our whole intent was to sell it, because when he left the *Boulder Weekly* they'd been offered a million dollars for the *Boulder Weekly*. Well, Swift Publishing Company came by and did an analysis according to their formulas and they said to give us 460,000 dollars for our newspaper. It was a good newspaper. Oh, Joel is a good writer. Of course Joel and I are both a little bit liberal and Paul is not. But this is a real conservative community.

AW:

Fort Collins?

GW:

Fort Collins.

AW:

As opposed to Boulder, which is just the opposite.

GW:

Yeah.

AW:

I lived in Broomfield for a long time.

GW:

We had Cheyenne, we had—it starts with a G down the road, down east there—Windsor, Fort Collins—there's a million people in that valley. And the Coloradian, the local daily, was owned by Gazette, and our distribution turned out to be seventeen thousand bigger than their distribution. And we were pushing them out—

AW:

What was your paper called?

GW:

The Fort Collins Weekly. (laughs) But anyway, Swift said, "We want to go ahead and push the *Gazette* out of business. You guys are nearly doing it. If you'll let us meet these criteria, we'll give you over a million dollars for your paper." So we had to fire all of our sales staff and hire their new director of sales, and we didn't have enough money to do that of course, so we brought in an old man from Tulsa, Bryan Rice. He was in the oil business with Joel and Paul early when they got out of high school. Well, we had to give him a fourth of the paper, but he gave us enough money to punch so we said in an interview, "We'll do this in a year if you meet all these criteria. Well at the end of a year we met the criteria and we sold it for 1.4 million. But anyway, that paid Joel's IRS taxes. His wife Ellen plays for the symphony in Denver—flute, I think. I don't know what she plays. But she's a world-renowned repairer of professional musician's wind instruments. She gets flutes from other countries. She's always done this in the basement of their home. She has a big practice repairing these flutes and stuff. I don't know exactly what all is involved. But they bought a brand new home, a nice big home. I believe it's in Longmont. A new development and just what they've always dreamed of. And two weeks later, she goes in for a breast deal and she has breast cancer. Now she's doing chemotherapy. Isn't that awful?"

AW:

Yeah.

GW:

But anyway, that's what Joel's doing now. He's held on as a consultant with Swift for a little while but he didn't like the way they did business. You know they put in new telephone systems, they'd just spend money, spend money, spend money. He says, "You can't make money for a weekly doing that sort of thing."

AW:

No, it's like being a musician. You don't have much control about what comes in so you have to have a lot of control about what goes out.

GW:

Yes.

AW:

So he's still living in Longmont?

GW:

Yes.

AW:

The reason I was asking is I travel up to Colorado fairly often, and I'd love to talk to him.

GW:

You ought to interview him. He wrote that article you read, and he wrote the book *Harvest of Rage*. And Joel went to a lot of farm wakes with me.

AW:

Well I can call you when I know I'm going to be up that direction and find out how to get hold of him.

GW:

Now he has some *Tulsa World* articles and here's some stress family. I don't remember what this is all about. But anyway, here's something that Dr. James, the Commissioner for the Mental Health _____ (??) wrote. I can't remember what's in here. But we made a presentation to the mental health director's meeting in Washington, D.C. and I think that was written for it. And here's a job letter I wrote to Glen English. And this is more of—you've got that one. Here's a little hand-out that we usually started our sessions with that, you know, is just basically telling about going through a loss and about depression and how to treat it and some key issues.

Here's a letter to Lincoln, Nebraska, to their commissioner. And here's some articles from Val Farmer who was a great writer during that time, up in Nebraska I think. And here's some more mental health stuff for the workshops we had. Here's a letter to the commissioner from Nebraska. And here's one from Kentucky. He came down and did a video by the way. I gave him a lot of videos, and I don't know what he ever did with his video he did while he was in Oklahoma. And here's some research information coming from our community mental health centers about the results of what it did to people in the rural areas and the increase in domestic violence and alcoholism and some data on my profession. Here's *Armed and Dangerous*. That's

written by Joel Dyer. And then after the conference of churches moved, when I went as director of Chisolm Trail—I directed the Ag-Link. [I was] acting director of Ag-Link also. We had key people in all the areas that worked with individuals. And here was kind of the organizational chart, I guess. And here's one of the better articles. This is in Utne Reader and it's an article by Joel.

AW:

I just noticed that one article that you showed me was from *The Sun*, which was a very interesting magazine.

GW:

And here's an article. I don't know whether I wrote this or somebody else did. I think maybe I might have. I don't know. And this is an article out of the State Government News that deals with farm stress. And here's an article that's about the hotline in the Stillwater paper and I think I've got this in there. Here's an article about "studies show suicide among farmers." See, the suicide rate per hundred thousand for the whole population runs around fifteen per hundred thousand. I mean it's just an ongoing number. In corrections we try to stay lower than nineteen per hundred thousand—I mean the formula. Juvenile is higher. In the nursing home people it's higher. Psychologists and—

AW:

Policemen.

GW:

Policemen and psychiatrists are high on the lists.

AW:

Yeah when I got out of police work in 1979 I think we were second only to New York Jewish psychiatrists. It was a bad time for being a cop.

GW:

The highest rate during the farm crisis was, I think, Wisconsin. They got close to sixty-two for a hundred thousand.

AW:

Wow.

GW:

And Montana got to forty-nine. I think we got close to forty or forty-two per hundred thousand in the heat of the farm crisis. And I can't remember the other states but those are the three main

states' suicide rates.

AW:

Why were they different in those states? I mean, more so than say, here?

GW:

Well, I don't understand Montana, but the Grain Belt is where it really—from Iowa down to Texas.

AW:

Were they higher leveraged? More bank notes?

GW:

Yes, and there's more marginal farmers with heavy debt loads in the grain belt, you know. Well, go ahead and buy a new combine. You can write that off with your taxes, so the federal people would say. Well, why don't you buy that land out there? You don't need a combine, you need more property. Go buy that half-section over there. Well they did.

AW:

Plus a lot more of that land is dry land, is it not?

GW:

Yes.

AW:

You know, one of the things I've noticed—and this is not a scientific survey, but I've noticed that, visiting with cotton farmers on the southern plains—is that the dry land—of course that's almost all gone today—but when dry land was more common, the dry land farmers who were successful were farmers who owed no money. They looked like the poorest people in the county but they had the biggest bank accounts because they weren't spending money, which allowed them to weather that marginal productivity. So that would explain what you were just saying, that marginally, if you're leveraged in that dry land Grain Belt, you're in trouble.

GW:

My old dad said, "Boys—" He had several principles. One is, "Don't plan on a good crop but every five years. Plan on a marginal crop in three years." And he says, "Don't go in debt." He used parts available to repair things. We drove stuff that fell apart. Another one [was], "Boys, don't ever pay over eight percent interest. Use their money if it's below eight percent. Use your own money if it's above eight percent." (laughs) But anyway, here's a good article. I think I've got a copy but you may not have. I went through this stuff and I tell you—here's an article in

Farm and Garden. Yeah, I think that gives percentage, doesn't it? Forty-two percent, doesn't it say?

AW:
Yeah.

GW:
Per hundred thousand.

AW:
Yeah, triple the population rate almost.

GW:
Yeah, here's the same article. And here's some Val Farmer stuff. He was a great writer during that time. And here's one. I don't even know what newspaper this is out of. It talks about Mona Lee in it, I know that. Oh, this is a great lady. She helped us a lot. She's a nurse and we've traveled a lot together and she helped us with suicide interventions. And here's maybe some more articles that might—Now then, here's a shirt that Garth Brooks, Vince Gill, and Joe Diffie did a concert for Oklahoma and they raised about thirty thousand dollars, net. That's after we paid for—the Ag-Link hotline kindly sponsored it, and we had to pay seventeen thousand for—we thought we was going to go broke—for the sound system. We had to pay—expense, expense. But it came out all right. So you can have that.

AW:
Oh, great.

GW:
That's yours. I've got some more if you want them.

AW:
No, one will be great to put in our archive. Now let me ask you about these papers. Do you want these back?

GW:
No. You know, you can't take this stuff to the grave with you. And I'm probably going to live another five years at best.

AW:
You look better than that.

GW:

Well, I've got diabetes and I'm losing the feeling in my legs. I've got a lot of stuff going on. I had cancer of the urethra. Went up to the Mayo Clinic and had those removed. The guy says, "Do you smoke?" "No." "Have you ever smoked?" "Yeah I used to smoke cigars, but that was a long time ago." "Do you do any tobacco?" I said, "Well I do Copenhagen." He said, "How long have you been doing that?" I said, "Sixty years." (laughter) Well I was all right. I was off of it for a long time and I had some surgery—prostate surgery—later, here. I called Carol to come up to the hospital. I said, "Carol, I can't handle it any more. Would you bring me some Copenhagen?" (AW laughs) And she says, "Daddy, I can't do that. They won't let you have it in the hospital." I said, "I'll handle that if you'll just bring it up here." So bless her heart, against her will she brought me some. I've been on it ever since. You know, working around combines you couldn't smoke. Everybody chewed tobacco or dipped.

AW:

Yeah, I've never chewed or dipped. I just never did it, but I understand it's a whole lot harder to get off of than inhale.

GW:

I go to hit a golf club and I can't pick up a club without a dip, you know. I mean it's just part of my life. But like the old psychiatrist that smokes a lot, that I just got through working with—you know, he talked about smoking and he says, "Well, there's three things [in my] life that I don't want people to mess with. Is my wife, my psychiatry, and my smoking." (AW laughs) He said, "When I die, I've told my wife to throw three or four cartons in the coffin just before they close it."

AW:

(laughs) Just in case.

GW:

Well, I'm not that bad, but he quit. His wife had lung cancer. I had a secretary that smoked like a fiend. I used to ride with him and I got asthma, I think, from riding with him. But anyway, we worked several different hospitals together. When I was at Lawton he was the lead psychiatrist. We lived here and we drove down every day, back and forth. But anyway, he quit, and just as soon as he quit, he had colon cancer, then he had lung cancer. And the colon cancer, they put a bag on his side and he said, "I'm not going to stand for that." So he hadn't even gotten well and they had him reversed. And now he's working. They meet him outside of the prison down there. He gets in a wheelchair and they roll him in to the west gate which you can go in without steps, and he does his psychiatry and they roll him back out, and his son drives him. He gets in his car and drives back. He's Greek. You know Ty? Greek.

AW:

Tell me something about Lawton. Where there enough Native American farmers for you to make any observations about how they handled the farm crisis versus Anglo?

GW:

The biggest problem individuals that we saw, of Native American, was in the Tahlequah area. A lot of Tahlequah farmers—Native American—were pushed off their land. And a lot of those that considered themselves Native American but were black—I forget what they call them—

AW:

Creole?

GW:

Well—

AW:

That's what they'd be in Louisiana.

GW:

Yeah, Creoles. Anyway, one of them was a professor there at the university and she was pushed off her land. She really got with them. But they lost a lot of land up there. They started raising chickens and Cargill or whoever was dealing with would decide they didn't like what they was doing. They would get personality stuff and just—you know, they had built these barns and stuff and they just wouldn't send them any more chickens. They're gone. You know, the farmer's about the only person in the country that produces food and fiber, and he doesn't decide what he gets for his product. Chicago decides that. So that's what makes it such high risk. He can store his stuff—

AW:

Sometimes.

GW:

Sometimes. But he's liable to lose money on that. I've lost money on wheat.

AW:

Well and some of it you can't store, like cotton seed. That was one of the things that was interesting about the oil seed business which my father was in his whole life. You could store soy beans but not the meal, but you could store cotton meal but not the cotton seed. And so in the one case, a farmer in the Midwest with soybeans was in a lot better shape than the farmer with the cotton, because you had to get that out. You couldn't hold once you got out of the field. And it

was really interesting to see how differently the banking was because of that timeline on the product. And I guess the worst example is truck farms—tomatoes, onions. There's no shelf life at all on that sort of thing.

GW:

Yeah, those perishables. Down at Altus one year, my brother planted about one hundred and sixty acres of onions. (laughs) Big mistake. You know, you dig them and then it rains and they're gone. In West Texas we raised potatoes. My Dad did.

AW:

And you can store a potato.

GW:

Yeah, unless—we raised those Shastas, you know, not Russets. And it didn't take much to get them—once they'd start rotting, they'd go. Oh, they'd go. They're perishable.

AW:

Well I've yet to meet a West Texas Farmer with a good story about onions. (GW laughs) One day I expect to but I've never—

GW:

They've got a back road that goes from Hulbert out to Highway 54. It's called Ozark Trail. And I'd take it all the time going from the prison to Lawton; I worked at the Lawton prison too. And we called it the Ozark Speedway, because there was no highway patrol. You've got a few dips. You've got to watch it or you'll lose it. But that whole area there was called Onion Flats. (laughs)

AW:

So they know how to use onions. They know how to sell onions.

GW:

No, they lost all their money.

AW:

Oh, they lost it all?

GW:

Now it's all in wheat. (laughter)

AW:

I hate to interrupt a great story, but on these papers—some of these I noticed have a little mold.

We'll copy those and we're going to throw that moldy part away [if] that's all right with you.

GW:

Sure. They're yours. This is—I'm just sorry I gave away all the videos.

AW:

Now I see that you have some tape there. What kind of stuff is that?

GW:

Here's one—I have no idea what's on them. This "Farm Crisis"—that's the original. And here's one, "Farm Diary." I don't know what that is. I don't know whether those are the same or not, but you know those are the only ones I could find? These are duplicates. That's all I could find out there and I had like twenty of them. I guess I've given them all away. I may run into them one of these days. I looked at all these boxes out here.

AW:

Well if you do, let me know. We'll convert these to digital.

GW:

Now, Mona Lee has a lot of them that I had.

AW:

Okay.

GW:

And Mona Lee will have a lot of videos.

AW:

Okay. Do you happen to have an email address for Mona Lee?

GW:

No. But I was having trouble finding her phone number.

AW:

Well you gave me one.

GW:

She still gets calls from all over the nation related to farm stuff. And she just had to back away from it. It was getting to her emotionally after years and years of that. So she just had to hide. She has an unlisted number and she won't let me give it to just everybody.

AW:

Well, what you could do is, I'll leave you a couple of extra cards and rather than giving me her number, if she would feel better about it, you give her mine.

GW:

She wouldn't mind for you to call her.

AW:

Well I sure wouldn't mind if you wanted to just give her my number and let me just leave these with you.

(Shuffling papers)

GW:

Let me go through here one more time. That number is in here somewhere. Brock.

AW:

There was a real old number on one of those contact sheets but that's twenty years old.

GW:

Yeah, she's lived several places since then I'm sure. I'm going to have to ask the wife. Maybe she knows where it is.

AW:

Also while you're looking for that, I've got release form I'd like to get a signature on. I've got two copies there so that you can keep one. But that allows us to give scholars access to the interview that we're recording today.

You don't need to sign the second one if you don't want to because that's your copy. But if you want me to sign the second one I will.

GW:

No, that's all right. Let me go ask Ruth Ann where Mona Lee's number is.

Isn't that a sight? I've been calling her several times lately but I don't know where I left her number.

AW:

Well it's been a blessing and a curse to have these phones that store the number. It's good to

have it but if it ever disappears from the phone I'm in trouble.

GW:

And see it just erased all the numbers it called lately. I rely on that a lot.

That is a sight. I don't think information has it.

AW:

Well that's all right. When you get it next time, if you wouldn't mind just calling me and letting me know what that number is?

GW:

Sure, I'll do it. I may find it right here pretty quick. (Presses phone numbers)

Automated Woman's Voice:

We're sorry, you have reached a number that has been disconnected or is no longer in service.

GW:

That's the number I thought was. (Presses phone numbers)

Automated Man's Voice:

If you would like to make and receive calls anywhere in the United States absolutely free, visit Magic Jack.

GW:

Well, that's beside me.

AW:

Well it's going to be some time before I get back toward Durant, and if her son is ill it would be better to make sure there's a little time before I—

GW:

Well right now that's her new project in life. And he has some problems I think. And he's about junior high age now. And he is a musician by the way. He's a budding musician and she's trying to capitalize on his talents and keep him well. I've got old Arnold Kaiser's number in here. Van Horn Manor. But he's not there anymore. But Arnold Kaiser—I got the hotline that he was suicidal. I took a state car and drove up there and parked in front of his house, knocked on the door, and nobody would answer the door. I went down to the convenience store and called him. He answered the phone, and I said, "This's Dr. Wallace and I was coming out here and I want to visit with you." He says, "Who are you, what do you do?" And I told him who I was and what I

represented and [that I] come from the hotline. And he said, "I thought you were back here, another one of those federal people coming to put some heavy stuff on me."

AW:

He wasn't going to answer the door.

GW:

"So come on down!" So I went down to his house and he let me in and he was depressed, and like I said, a psychiatrist lived across the street. And I said, "You need to take some antidepressants, Arnold, because it will help you a little bit every day. Every day you'll start feeling a little better." "Well I'm not going to take any drugs." He said, "I'm not a druggie." And I said, "Are you all right, Arnold?" [He said] "Well, as good as I can be." I said, "Well Arnold, will you go inpatient with me?" "No." I said, "Well, can I go inpatient with you? Can I stay here tonight?" (AW laughs) He said, "Sure! I'll cook us some steak." So he cooked us steak and I stayed with him all night and the next morning he went out to the mental health center with me in Guymon, and Dr. Alberti was a psychologist there. Dr. Alberti—I wanted him to meet her. She's a great gal. She taught at Panhandle University for a while. Still a psychologist here in town. But anyway, I said, "You've got to ride herd on Arnold. You've got to check on him." She said, "I'll do 'er. I'll take him. Arnold is my project now. You can just stay in Oklahoma City." (laughs) But anyway, they went through an awful lot with him, trying to keep him alive, because he didn't care. We thought he might hurt somebody. He talked about getting the gun and shooting his—there was a guy that heads up—Carl Cornelius, the judge or whoever in charge of the bankruptcy. He said, "I'm going to kill him." I said, "No Arnold, you can't talk like that. Let's just deal with that. You don't want to hurt others. You don't want to hurt yourself. And our job is to do both—make sure you don't do either one."

AW:

How do you connect with a person that's in that state of mind? Because what you are saying are rational things.

RW:

I found it.

GW:

What did you say? You found it?

RW:

Did you?

GW:

No I've looked everywhere I know to look, Sugar. What you do is—all therapy is, is talk. You get them talking, talking, and they talk and insights, insights, insights. “If I kill this man—” But you don't pass judgment—“That's stupid to say that.” You go along and you smoothly spread things out. Start spreading it out just like you're spreading cement. Then they get enough insights. And you pretty well pick up on that. At some point you ask them, “Arnold, you still feel like you might hurt somebody?” Now that's the big question after you go through all this stuff. And usually they'll give you a truthful answer. “Well, I don't think about it as much as I used to.” “No I don't.” “Yeah I'm still angry at him.” Well you're not through with him yet. The same with suicide. “Do you still feel like you might hurt yourself?” “Do you have any thoughts about hurting yourself?” “Do you have a plan?” And they say, “Well, not now.” (snaps fingers) Usually you can believe them, because this time you have enough rapport that they don't have a tendency to try to go over the window or under it or around it, but to come on through it and be honest with you. Anyway, you treat homicidal thoughts just like you do suicidal thoughts—I mean similar. Similar therapy working for both. The expert on that, if I had to make a referral, was to Dr. Quiet at Eastern State University at Ada. He is so good that twenty years ago—thirty years ago—the policeman in Dallas that shot the teenager and a couple of other individuals, which was questionable, very questionable, and had the community up in arms—

— here we go.

AW:

Oh thank you, Ruth.

GW:

It takes my wife—she's the brains of this family.

RW:

No, I'm not. (laughs)

GW:

Anyway, he goes through a process. The city of Dallas hired him to bring in officers to interview him and see if anybody had these deep thoughts of hurting somebody. He could dig that out of them. Then you put them in therapy. He had one hundred and ninety-nine of them.

AW:

Wow.

GW:

He worked with all of them and they had less and less shootings in the street. Some people you

put a hog leg on their hip and they become a different person.

AW:

Oh I know. I told you I was twelve years in that business and I personally had chances or instances where I was legally justified in using it and I didn't. And I always wonder why did I not do it versus somebody else who actually looked forward to maybe having a chance, you know?

GW:

And you had these subconscious feelings of hurting people. Some people just have that. That's part of them. That's a little professor in them that pops up.

AW:

That keeps them from doing it?

GW:

Or keeps them from not doing it. From doing it or not doing it.

AW:

Right. Right. Whereas in my case it was like, I don't have to do this, why bother.

GW:

You didn't have that hidden—I don't know how to express it. People just hide—

AW:

Does that come from—and I don't know a thing about psychiatry, but does that come from something in their raising, in their past?

GW:

Well, we call it the wounded professor in you.

AW:

The wounded professor?

GW:

Yeah. In other words, it pops up—if you're fixing a tire on the other side of the road and a car comes by you and nearly hits you and you throw the lug wrench at him or you pull out your gun and shoot at him, you're going to hurt people. Instead of getting on your cellphone and saying, "Officer, this car—," you know. There's some people that just carry the urge down deep to hurt people. Domestic violence stuff.

AW:

Then there are people like my father that would say all the time, "I'm going to shoot that son of a buck." And I don't think he would have ever done anything like that. By saying it, is he getting it out of his system, is that what he's doing?

GW:

Yeah well he's just expressing opinion. But my dad was about that way. He'd get in fights. He was an old baseball player. I used to watch him play baseball and he'd always end up in a fight. He loved to fight. We moved to Altus. The first day we were there from Texas, we pulled up in front of Prudent's Pontiac dealer next to—we were going into United next door. And us boys are getting out of an old '38 Ford and one of us kicked a milk bottle out and it broke and old Prudent come out bouncing out of there and said, "Pick up that damn glass!" It was a mistake. My dad hit him right—decked him.

AW:

(laughs) First day in town.

GW:

Oh yeah, first day in town. But we had a highway patrolman that was killed out in the country by Olustee. What happened—this cab driver was a mess and kind of running prostitution rings and that sort of thing in Altus—his girlfriend or one of his girls worked at this restaurant in the café and tipped(??) him and he went out there and shot her through the plate glass window. Well highway patrol got after him and they stopped him over by _____(??) and he shot the highway patrolman and killed him. His name was Long. Well, my dad was on the jury and they gave him the death penalty. And one time Dad and I were talking and he says, "You know one of the things that bothers me in my life—it still haunts me—voting to put that man to death." I mean he had no real feelings of, I felt so good about that. You know, all this rough talk of being a rough guy—he didn't want to hurt anybody, even this guy that killed the highway patrolman. The fact that he voted to put this man to death—it really haunted him. You'd think that shouldn't bother him, but you know, that's kind of like values of human life. It's a value system. But back to what you said—yes, a kid that doesn't have nurturing as a child—even the things like nursing, like skin-to-skin contact. Little things all along the way. A lot of those guys grow up without a conscience. They don't care whether they hurt you or not. Prisons are full of them. No conscience. Those are the guys we're talking about. Your dad had conscience. My dad had conscience.

AW:

Yeah, in fact I grew up without prejudice. I was born in '48 so you know the time period I grew up in, and I got to be a teenager and an adult and I didn't have prejudice against blacks or

browns. We had blacks and browns that worked at the farm that we lived on when I was little. But yet when I was growing up my father used every pejorative on the planet. He talked like the most prejudiced person in the world. And when I got older I thought back and I thought to myself, Well how in the world did I escape that? And then it dawned on me that all those years I'd never seen him behave in a prejudiced way. When he was actually around a black person or a Mexican-American person he was a gentleman. He was different than he would talk about them if they weren't there. And I've always thought that to be an interesting sort of a paradox. And he also grew up on a farm. So here's another question I've got. Treating a farm hotline case, was it different than treating a hotline case from any other part of the culture?

GW:

Yes.

AW:

What was the difference?

GW:

The farm is like family.

AW:

So losing the farm is a whole lot different than losing your car.

GW:

Yeah. It's part of you. It's deep, and maybe their great-grandfather homesteaded the land they're farming and here they've lost it. In other words, it's as bad as losing a family member. That's why it hurts so bad, so deep. And what it does to them about feelings of self-worth and value as a human being—the words are: no hope, helpless, hopeless. Those are two words that describe it. That's true in the city. Helpless, hopeless.

The important thing in—well I'll give you a good example. One of my best friends is Bob Allen who was director for years and years of Education Television station in Oklahoma, and he had fought battles with depression, real suicidal. And he called me one night and said, Glen — the governor was after him, Governor Nigh, trying to get his job—and he says, you know, “That's been my life. I'm dedicated to that and I used to work there years ago.” I said, “Bob, you're not thinking about hurting yourself?” “Well, I've had thoughts.” I said, “Well I'm coming over tonight.” We talked, and I said, “What do you want out of this world? What are your goals? I just want to know the thing that you want most, more than anything else.” And he says, “Well I'd like to have a house on a lake.” “Okay.” So we drove around to all the lakes the next day looking for a house on the lake. And then he got a real estate dealer in Midwest City and he bought a house out here on the lake. He hasn't had any [thoughts of] suicide [since].

See, the best outlet for wellness for somebody who's suicidal is something that will consume

them emotionally. Over here in a nursing home, what do you do for that guy? What is he going to do for a new project? “Well, Mr. Ayers, have you ever thought about getting you a girlfriend?” In the nursing home. The point is, emotions are like a house being on fire. If you think you can’t get out of the building, you panic, and you can even hurt people trying to get out, or hurt yourself. There are no options in the mind. That’s why you have these little charts on the wall [about] how to get out. Well, emotional panic is the same thing. As long as they have options, you have options. You have a house on a lake, that’s an option. You’ve got the money. That’s what you want in life. It’s more important than that damn job. Your health is more important than that damn job. But the expert on that was this Lou, this nurse. I got this article from her. She was good at that. She’d say, “Let’s find him a new project.” Mr.—I can’t remember his first name—Gerard—is the greatest suicidologist I believe there is. And his writings—that’s his biggie. You know, you go through the crisis and then you find a new project. We had a guy up here at Carney(??) or Carver(??), Oklahoma, and his name was Warrenberger. He had been president of the Farmers Union. He farmed a lot of wheat land. He got pushed off his land, plus he nearly went to jail for selling mortgaged cattle, and his daughter got suicidal. The kids listened to stuff around the dinner table and they don’t see how those kids internalized that. Well this little teenage girl cut her wrists. We worked with her and we worked with him. He was suicidal. Well, he ended up—he got a federal sentence and was out here at El Reno, and I’d go by—I had a group out there. I even had the assistant mayor of Dallas and a professional baseball player in my group out there. They was on the outside group. You know, they have an inside group and an outside low-risk group. But we got a video that he pulled out from a box under his bed, his bunk, and he says, “Dr. Wallace, this is all I own in this world.” Little old wife, Regina—Latrina—whatever her name was. He got out.

Hot as it is in El Reno, he raised a lot of sheep. He took care of the sheep at the reformatory. He said, “I used to drive by this when I was a kid with my daddy, and I’d say, ‘What’s that big building over there?’ And he said, ‘That’s where they keep all the bad people.’” He said, “Now I’m there.” But when he got out, he went to work for the Department of Corrections, managing their farms at Helena. His wife went to work in the mentally retarded facility at Enid, and they became happy again, without the farm. And the last time I talked to him, I said, “Mr. Warrenberg[er], you know, your quality of life is good. Is there anything that really bothers you now?” “Yeah,” he says, “I didn’t leave the farm for my two sons. They’re still trying but my heart goes out to them and I could have set them up. They could have been a good farmer like I was.” He says, “The pick program broke me.” During the Reagan administration they had the pick program where they plowed up their wheat or something. I don’t know what that was all about. But he says, “We are happy, and our family is—I just worry about my two sons a lot.” But he’s working today at the Department of Corrections at the Crabtree in Helena—The Crabtree Facility. His little old wife—they’re closing that place in Enid, but she probably has enough—they got hospitalization, they got retirement, you know. A lot of them became—one guy shot himself.

We lost about three or four named Pilgre—P-i-l-g-r-e—from Waurika, seven miles west of

Waurika. And of course we go in and take the guns out of their house and all this stuff, and I made several trips. I put him in in-patient down at Wichita Falls to Red River or something—mental health deal. He had a speech defect—a lisp—a real bad lisp, and he was self-conscious about that. A good farmer, but he lost his land because of high debt load. He drove a butane truck. He worked at a cattle auction out in Marietta. He tried a lot of things. His wife left him and went to OSU to get her moved up there with the son to get her degree. And I made several trips every time I got a chance to go by and see Jerry Pilgre. And then one day I got a call from Mona Lee, he shot himself at his house. The options just didn't work. He had so much depression, just deep depression that fell on him and he wouldn't take his medication like he ought to.

Homer Yowell lived at Piedmont. They called me out there and I went out there. I believe it was on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. His wife was a nurse at the hospital in El Reno, a psychiatric nurse, by the way. And he was sitting in the chair crying, and here's a guy who is a Korean War veteran. He was a paratrooper. Gone through the war. He had been on the school board, a deacon in the Baptist Church, a pillar in the community, and he cried the whole time I was there, sitting in this big old chair. I said, "Well Homer, you know I worry about you." After a period I said, "Homer, let me take you down to the in-patient unit and stabilize your depression." He says, "Dr. Wallace, there is one thing I can promise you for sure. If you take me to in-patient unit I will kill myself." I said, "Okay Homer." I said, "Mrs. Yowell, let's gather up all the weapons in this house—knives and everything." And I called Dr. Shackelford, a psychiatrist, and said, "Dr. Shackelford, would you see him Monday morning?" He said, "Sure. What time?" "Ten o'clock." I said, "Homer, we got a psychiatrist to see you and he'll help you work through your depression." He stopped crying. I felt a little bit better. His wife's a nurse. We took the weapons out. Monday morning—that must have been Sunday night. Monday morning, I got a call from Mrs. Yowell. She said, "Homer's dead." And I said, "I'll be right out there." And I got out there and he had gone back—there's a .410 shotgun that he got his son-in-law to shoot opossums or armadillos or raccoons. We didn't know that, and she didn't know that. Well he went back and sat by the wheel of his pickup and put that .410 right in the roof of his mouth. When I got out there, there were pieces of his mustache in the back of that pickup. Brains, pieces of his skull everywhere.

And you know, the problem with that, is a lot. One is the guilt I have for not forcing him—calling the sheriff and having him take him to in-patient. Mona Lee and I have to live with the Homer Yowells for the rest of our lives. We have to process that. Dr. Shackelford called me and I told him what happened and he said, "No, my appointment is with you." (laughs) So we always have what we call a psychological autopsy where we retrace everything I did and what I said and what he said and we process all of that. Mrs. Yowell was interviewed by the people who had come from Britain and Germany. Everybody has interviewed Mrs. Yowell about the farm crisis, and you may want to talk to her. Still lives in the same house. The problem was, she had her dad and mother had a lot of oil investments and she ended up with a lot of money and he [Homer] remarried her late in life. She had kids and he had kids. They didn't have any kids together. And the preacher had preached a sermon just before that, that suicide is not an unpardonable sin. Bad

news.

AW:

Bad timing for sure.

GW:

Bad timing. And he had a heavy debt load and she wouldn't help him, he didn't think, like she should. And he had gone out—they were having a family reunion out at the homestead—and he'd gone out there and mowed the grass around the lake and he found a dead calf. And that was the straw that broke the camel's back. A dead calf, that's it. It was just a little too much. So anyway, we buried Homer— and we had a lot of successes.

We were called up to that town up by Polk City. The name of that town is Bedford. They called us and we got up there. Mona Lee and I both went, and he's in this big chair with a fifth of Jack Daniels. He had drank most of it. He had just got through—they had some paint stored in the garage. He had shot holes and had just repainted the garage. He was sitting with a pistol in his hand in his big chair. Mr.—I can't remember his name. It'll come to me before long. And the wife worked at a nursing home and she couldn't go to work. I think he may have put a flat on her tire. I can't remember. Another pillar in the community, a great Christian man, a veteran.

Anyway, I said, "Mr.-whatever-his-name-was," finally got the gun away from him, and said, "We're going in-patient." And he said, "I don't think I want to go." So the Yowell thing—I called his pastor and said, "Would you come out here and help us out a little bit?" And the pastor says, "I'll take you to Middle Lake." That's where we called and got him a bed. Well, we started a convoy—Mona Lee and her car, me and my car, the pastor with the patient and his wife—and we convoyed to Middle Lake. Well he never did kill himself—[long pause] yet. You never know when depression hits them again. A lot of times we think they're well and there's no way to follow up forever. A new project is the only way. From one hundred and fifty miles away, it's hard to work on a new project.

But anyway, and then we had one that was going to kill a lender—homicidal stuff—out of Talequah, and he had a chicken farm and he was losing everything, and his wife had cancer. And he pulled up—the ASCS office demanded he come by the office—well his wife had just taken her chemo shot, was in the car, hot summer day. And he said, "I can't stay long because my wife is in the car. She just had a chemo shot." And he said, "I told you to just sit down here. I need to talk to you." Real ugly stuff. He said, "I'm going to get that guy." So we had to work through that. As far as I know he never killed anybody, but he sure wanted to. Mona Lee will remember his name too. She can remember that stuff. I can't.

Oh, something that Joel went with me on—same deal in Carnegie. I said, "Joel, you want to go with me to an intervention?" "Sure." So he got his motorcycle and met me out at this guy's house about two miles south of Carnegie, a nice little brick home. His wife had left him. A little twelve year old girl sitting there. He had guns and empty whiskey bottles lining the deal [mantle] over the fireplace and he was drunk. We ended up loading him in the car and taking him to

Tolliver at Lawton. And Joel did follow-up with him. He visited him at times I wasn't there in the drug treatment. And it turned out he got himself together. His mother was in the nursing home and she was ill, lots of bad stuff.

I'm trying to think of another good one. Oh, we worked with a farmer out by Enid. It wasn't Enid—it was closer to Kingfisher. And he was suicidal and we thought we had done all right with that one. He wouldn't pay his bills. Most of these farmers, they get depressed, their desk looks like this—just bills. His wife said, "Look at that office. He won't touch that stuff anymore. And he wonders why we are in trouble." And every time we'd go there we'd take food with Willie Nelson money. We'd take three or four sacks of groceries. But anyway, he killed himself. He drove a big John Deere tractor off of a bridge and killed himself.

AW:

Wow. That's determined.

GW:

Yeah. He was through. He was through with it. Helpless, hopeless.

AW:

How did you get hooked up with the Willie Nelson organization?

GW:

American Agriculture Movement was the one that really started—actually it started with Wilma Dorman up at Panhandle. Wilma—they called it something else—Farmers for—and they put us in the newsletter about farmers being pushed off their land. And then they started meeting regularly and they named it the American Agriculture Movement. Then they formed a tractorcade—and Wilma Dorman went on that—where they drove their tractors to Washington D.C.

AW:

You know we're having a reunion of all those folks in Lubbock in June.

GW:

Well Wilma's one of them.

AW:

Is she going to come?

GW:

She's supposed to ride with me.

AW:

Great. Well I'll get a chance to visit with her then, because we're going to be doing interviews then. Oh, I'll be looking forward to that.

GW:

Mona Lee will be there too.

AW:

Oh, good. Oh, great!

GW:

Her and Wayne Allen who was one time director of the AgLink hotline. He lives up in Perkins and he was pushed off his land, ended up being a truck driver. Wayne Allen will be there, and I think he made the Chicago Board of Trade demonstration and I think he went on the tractorcade. I'm not sure. But in all of that, we ended up contacting Willie Nelson. I don't know how that came about. Mona Lee will know. And Mona Lee became one of his best friends. And Willie went through some bad stuff with the IRS and then his son out in Nashville went out in a barn, stacked up some bales of hay and drank a fifth of whiskey, or whatever, and took a rope and hung himself. Nineteen or twenty years old.

AW:

I didn't know about that.

GW:

He died after that. He had ADHD probably, I think. I'm almost sure.

AW:

The son?

GW:

Yeah. But he loved horses. Willie had him in the horse business in Nashville. So Willie had to deal with that. And his daughter, her husband is bipolar. And they both wouldn't take their medications. They'd try to control the bipolar with marijuana. And while we were there, some guys—Mona Lee said this guy delivered, a taxi cab driver—well, I'm not going to get into that. But anyway, we worked a lot with her. Her name is Susie, Susie Nelson. And we got her husband in-patient at Bethany Pavilion over here finally, and he was a picker for Willie Nelson. We got all kinds of stories. We could tell you about Mudslide. Mudslide was a picker for Willie Nelson from Hawaii. And we'd go to these concerts and Willie says, "I'll have you guys meet me at such-and-such place. I'll have Mudslide meet you." Mudslide was always our connection with Willie Nelson. Well, half the time Mudslide wouldn't show up, or Mudslide would show up

and we couldn't find Willie. (laughter) So Mona Lee and I spent a lot of time in the dark, waiting. Willie was good to us. When they got him for the IRS thing, they locked up all of his stuff wherever he lived, in San Antonio or wherever it was—Austin or—

AW:

I think it was Austin.

GW:

Austin. And then they locked down his bank account, and he had an old beat up guitar that wasn't a very good one. And he went out to the beach and got him a little house with no windows—a little shack. And they had federal helicopters come down and see if they could see him in the window—this side—this side, you know. And he was doing a gig out there and he married a Hawaiian girl, you know, and I think they have three kids. Anyway, maybe you ought to turn it off right now.

AW:

Sure, I'll pause it here.

GW:

I just didn't want to put that other part in there.

AW:

Sure.

GW:

You take Germany, France, Italy—they have all kinds of alcoholic beverages and they don't have that many alcoholics. They have killed off that generation. In Custer County one year we did a survey. We've got it here somewhere. I may not have it anymore. In Custer County, there's a hundred and fifty-something arrests for DUIs of Native Americans, and there's only one hundred and ten Native Americans who live in Custer County. Of course some of them are arrested over and over and over. The Native Americans weren't exposed to that until we brought it to them. And they had peyote and other stuff, but not alcohol.

AW:

Peyote is a little different.

GW:

It's different, yes.

AW:

Plus alcohol, to create it you have to live in one place. You have to distill it or ferment it. You can't do it horseback like you could peyote. So it's a real different culture that you have to have to even be able to provide it.

GW:

But the point is, they've got to go through the same thing that the European countries did.

AW:

Kill of the ones with the genes.

GW:

Yeah. That gene finally killed itself off. I can't tell you how many—well there's three or four, not that many—the last one was a guy by the name of Redmond. Thirty-five years old. Died in jail—alcoholic in Custer County Jail. Bless their hearts, they just can't drink. If you've got Native American blood you just shouldn't drink. They have an addiction to that sugar. Basically it's a sugar addiction right at the bottom line of all of it. Especially bourbon, and of course they use—I worked with the Indian Schools in Halence(??). We did a lot with Ponca City with the Ponca Indians. I used be a psychologist at one point for Concho Indian School. Bob Allen and I and his wife, who is a psychiatrist, tested all of the Native American kids at Concho up North by Ponca City, Chilocco, and Jones Academy, and the one at Riverside in Anadarko. But that's when—Bob and I worked together before—but he was between jobs then. He had been campaigning for Governor Hall and he campaigned for Leslie Fisher at the state schools, and he was between jobs and didn't have a job. So we tested all those kids.

Anyway, anywhere you'd walk in a gym you'd see a lot of spit on the floor. And here's the cultural thing: at Ponca City, you'd go up there and there would be a shade tree. White Eagle is the name of the little Native American town where most Poncas live. And here's these adults out under this tree passing this rag around, and there's these kids playing right there. In other words, it's okay. If you want to sniff gold paint or whatever you want to sniff, it's okay. So these kids, a lot of them have gold paint in their hair. But that's a hard circle to break, when it's okay.

Daddy's out there playing dominoes. They're all sniffing. But anyway, Dr. Mendrose and I went up there and did a seminar. Well you know, you do what you can. And Dr. Mendrose's philosophy is old Greek, that it's a form of suicide.

AW:

Just a little slower.

GW:

A little slower. Dr. Felactu that was a psychiatrist in the Bethany program—we got to talking one day. "What causes people to get on heroin or opiates?" And he said, "Well, Glen, it's very

simple.” I said, “Well I need to hear that.” He says, “These are people who can’t stand pain. It includes emotional pain. It starts with the medicine cabinet when they’re little. ‘Oh, sugar you have a stomach ache. You don’t have to go to school. Here, take these. Take some Pepsin and this aspirin and you just stay home today.’ ‘Oh, you hurt your finger. Let’s give you something so you won’t hurt so bad, give you some aspirin. Go in there and take a nap.’ We taught that generation, ‘Don’t try to deal with your pain. Always go to the medicine cabinet if you need something.’” So he said, “The bottom line is these people out here that come in here every morning to get their methadone, they’re people that can’t take pain.” He said, “It’s hard for us to teach them how to take pain.” He’s also Greek. One time on purchase orders, I saw him there for a casket. “What?” (AW laughs) I went in there and said, “Dr. Felactu, what’s this casket business?” “Well,” he says, “we’re always talking about death and dying, and I wanted to do in my group—get one of them lay in the casket and they go by and look at him and go back and sit in their chairs.” I said, “Dr. Felactu, what is the legislature going to say when they see we’ve ordered a casket for the methadone program?” (laughter) I said, “I’m not going to approve it.” He said, “Well you don’t have any guts.” And I said, “No I don’t.”

AW:

I’m not so sure that our legislature in Texas wouldn’t see caskets as a way to administer a program like that.

GW:

But anyway, a couple come screaming out of his office one day. He was a very unusual psychiatrist. He lives right over here still. He’s retired. They come screaming out and I said, “What’s the matter? What’s went on in there?” He had a couple in there and she was out of control screaming. And I said, “Well, the psychiatrist didn’t put you back together. Well, what went on?” She said, “He told my husband, ‘You’re treating her like an old dirty rug.’” And he had to lay down on the floor and let him wipe his feet on her. I said, “Dr. Felactu, I’m glad I didn’t stay around long enough for me to get through that.” (laughter)

AW:

Well it might have worked with a little more time.

GW:

He had me one day in his office. We were great friends. We didn’t always agree. And he says, “Would you get up and stand on top of my desk?” (laughter) And I said, “I don’t need any therapy today Dr. Felactu, I don’t think. I do but I’m not going to let you. You’re not supposed to work on your peers.” I got up on top of the desk and I said, “I feel like a fool up here.” He said, “You ought to. You don’t call me Dr. Felactu anymore, you call me Jim. I’m tired of you— you know, in our relationship, one of us is a little bit higher than the other one, but we’re not. Do you understand that?” I said, “Can I get off the desk now?” He said, “Yeah.” (laughter) Oh my.

We had a Mrs. Lundy, one of our lead social workers, had the great ideas. In our meeting, she says, "We all voted that we're not keeping the methadone clinic open late enough at night for people to get their methadone." So she wanted to extend the hours. So we looked at the staffing schedule. I told Dr. Felactu, "We're going to extend the hours." "Oh?" he says, "I wasn't in that meeting was I?" I said, "No, but you should have been." "Well I wasn't there, but I'm glad that you geniuses made up this decision. Who suggested this?" I said, "Barbara Lundy." "You mean, Mrs. Enough-is-Never-Enough? Is that the lady that introduced this?" So from then on he called her, "Here comes Enough-is-Never-Enough down the hall! Watch out!" But anyway, we didn't extend the hours. He bombed that out.

And the legislature come over and a representative from Tulsa, Mrs. Haynes, had lost a son to drugs, and she was on our case all the time. She came over and interviewed Dr. Felactu and went back and tried to talk people into firing the commissioner. When she was coming, I said, "Dr. Felactu, this is a bad mistake. Just let me talk to her." "No, I want to talk to her." (laughter) I don't know what went on but I can imagine.

One time the OSBI called and they called me and they said, "There's people out there in your parking lot. They're trading TVs and drugs." And so we looked around the bushes and there were all kinds of needles in the bushes. And they said, "You've got to have these people charged." I said, "Well, you're sitting up the street with binoculars, you've got pistols, and that's your job." I said, "We don't carry guns. We are in the helping process. We're not out there to try to get people arrested. That's not our goal. Our goal is to try to keep them from getting arrested." So that didn't go over too big.

And the worst thing about that methadone in that old hospital [was that] we were always afraid someone would break in and get into the cabinets. And one night—this happened quite often—I get a call, "Your alarm system's going off." Like three o'clock in the morning I go out there and the Capitol Security guy is there, and he says, "Why don't you go on in?" And I said, "No, you've got the gun, you go on in." And we stood there arguing in the dark. I said, "Well I'll tell you what. You give me your pistol and I'll go in first." "Well I'm not going to give you my pistol." "Well you're the one, that's what you get paid to do. I'll follow you in." But it just happened that a fan had blown a piece of paper off the desk. We figured that caused the alarm to go off. There wasn't anybody in there. But you know, there's always a conflict between law enforcement people and the people who are in the helping process. Our goals are quite different. One night after we went private, Dr. Burrell called me one night and said, "We've got somebody breaking into our building." And he said, "Will you meet me out there?" And I said, "Sure." I went out there at midnight or so and he shows up with battle fatigues with an M-16. (laughter) I said, "I think you've overdone it a little bit Dr. Burrell." Sure enough there wasn't anybody in the building. (laughter)

AW:

But he was prepared.

GW:

He was prepared. He was an old—he had been—I should probably turn it off right now.

AW:

All right. I'll pause it.

GW:

You're operating right here. No one is normal; we're either elated or depressed. We have a little chart and we measure mental health by how far you get depressed and what are your tools, whether you're crying, acting out, drinking—you know, what are your crutches. But our job is to work them through that. We work them through a great loss. That happens a lot of times after a great loss—suicide, terminal illness, death of a kid. You know, all kinds of—that's life. But if you work them through it, through the anger, shame, blame, guilt, withdrawal, on the bottom, to being able to verbalize dialogue, dialogue, dialogue, with friends, with psychiatrists, with family—and they were here before, now they're up here. The point is, if you get through your loss correctly, with help or without help, you're much wiser, and you learn from that, and you become—like I talked about with Dr. Burrell—you become a much wiser person with a better quality of life usually. And then you go along here.

There's an old philosopher—I hate to tell you who it is: Buddha—years ago, two thousand years ago, a little more than that, [who] said, "When you come from the womb, as soon as they pick you up, you're entitled to a birthright when you walk on this earth. You're entitled to ten thousand great joys and ten thousand great sufferings. No one is immune. It's part of the deal. And the only way you grow in your walk on this earth is through your losses—your great losses. You've got to stay healthy. Because what's in store for you down the road? Another great loss." Now old Garth Brooks did a song about, "You don't want to know about the future." Like President Kennedy? It's good he didn't know what the future was going to hold for him.

AW:

We'd all be paralyzed.

GW:

We'd all be paralyzed. But anyway, that's what we'd tell the farmers, you know. "We'll get through this but now look, there's going to be more losses down the road." We want to learn how to handle them. We want to be able to walk through them and deal with our anger and our guilt and all the stuff that goes with it—hopeless, helpless stuff, and start looking at options. You don't have a dead end. That's somebody else's decision, not ours. And we're all going to die. Research says that one hundred percent of us are going to die.

AW:

(laughs) That's right.

GW:

Pretty good research. (laughs) But anyway, that's one of the things that you have to prepare them for. That this is not the end of it.

AW:

Getting through this is not the end of it.

GW:

Old Buddha is right you know. It's coming again. And the key word is no one is immune. I don't care who you are, you're going to have a great loss ahead of you. But we're going to stay healthy and we're going to be ready and we're going to march right through it like we did this last one.

AW:

I think that is a great spot in which to end this, on a philosophical, upbeat note. What do you think?

GW:

I think you're right.

AW:

All right. Thanks so much.

End of Interview

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