

**Oral History Interview of
Bette Ramsey**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson
September 5, 2017
Amarillo, Texas**

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Bette Ramsey who discusses her college years at Amarillo College and West Texas. Bette describes her up and down relationship with Buck and her relationships with her friends.

Length of Interview: 03:32:37

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Buck and Bette in college; public radio; hitchhiking	05	00:00:00
Buck's trip to New York	12	00:20:04
Church; some of Buck's friends	17	00:33:56
After Buck got back from New York	24	00:52:32
Her friend Melinda Hagy	28	01:08:07
How Bette met Melinda	31	01:18:35
The Grand Canyon story	33	01:25:48
Melinda leaving her mom's place; vacation in California	37	01:37:40
Asking Buck Out during Corrigan week	40	01:47:31
Taking Melinda to San Diego	43	01:58:10
Buck almost getting Bette banned from her sorority	46	02:09:37
Going out on a date at the Dream Diner	51	02:20:40
The Panhandle Barn Dance	54	02:30:40
Buck seeing Bette after joining the Marines; rocky relationships	58	02:42:12
Coming of age in the fifties	61	02:53:25
Campus life at West Texas	63	02:58:44
Bette's cooking	65	03:09:35
Meeting the Dali Lama; her mantra on life	69	03:32:48

Keywords

Amarillo Texas, family life and background, travel, 1950s, West Texas music

Andy Wilkinson (AW):

He was supposed to call yesterday. Let's see—make sure everything is working. This is the fifth of September. Andy Wilkinson in Amarillo, Texas at the home of Bette Ramsey and Amanda Ramsey and we're going—this is part three, I think, of our interviews and we will be talking about whatever comes to our mind. I looked back before I came up this morning over the last one which has been a long time ago. March of last year. I didn't realize it had been that long.

Bette Ramsey (BR):

Me either.

AW:

Yeah, and I always—it's a habit. We were talking about trying to get our good habits earlier. I make a habit of saying, "What's next?" and so after a period of time, you think it will be enough so here's what I'd written down for our next one: start with "Weak in the knees and bells and whistles." [Laughter] Now, I'm thinking what that is, is we had been talking about high school and you meeting Buck.

BR:

I think the "weak in the knees" might have been the first kiss I had from Buck, after when I had—but this wasn't high school. This was college.

AW:

After. Okay, but I mean, we had been talking about—we'd gotten through high school.

BR:

I think we'd gotten through high school and this is now with me being in junior college and him wandering all over. When I was in junior college at Amarillo College, Buck started out—I think he started out trying—even Amarillo College. I know he took a bunch of tests and he was really surprised at the results of the tests because he scored so high on IQ and all that stuff, and I don't think he had ever known what potential he had. I know he really never had to study or work hard at anything. He just had a photographic memory, but he managed to—every—it seems like to me, anyway looking back, every teacher that he had that really loved him because they saw what potential he had. Somehow he managed to make them angry later, you know? I don't know all the details of everything, but I know that he was so talented, and got the major role in the operetta the year I was a sophomore. Just in the chorus of the operetta, and Buck had one of the main parts in Brigadoon and made the director, who happened to be the drama person, teacher, angry because he got into an argument with him when we were rehearsing. Buck was probably right, but you know teachers don't like to be confronted and don't like for students to be smarter than they are.

AW:

Right, especially if they are wrong.

BR:

Especially if it is in front of other students, and he just told him to leave and gave the part to somebody else, and I know that made Buck feel bad because all he did was want to be right, I guess. I'm not sure if it was just—anyway, and the English teacher that I can't remember. It was Dr. something. When he was a senior, Buck had had several classes with him and really liked him because he was a very good knowledgeable teacher and of course, English literature and English grammar, Buck knew that backwards and forwards. And I don't know, somewhere along the way, if Buck could have managed to be in school, and could have gotten the scholarships that so many of his contemporaries got, like to all these major Ivy league schools, I don't have a clue what would have happened. He probably wouldn't have been able to handle it either. I don't know.

AW:

Well you know, he told me when I was talking to him, of course I didn't have this job and so I never interviewed him like this, but I did write a story, a couple of stories about him and so we talked about that. He said something that I've never forgotten and this is a quote. He said, "I've lived a life of potential. I've always had the potential, but I never delivered. I think I was afraid of succeeding."

BR:

I think that's true.

AW:

Is that? Do you think that carried through even as early as—

BR:

I think—because he would get to a point of people just being amazed, and overwhelmed, and then he would do something that messed it up. That carried through even—when Buck was performing, I told him, I got—I finally said, "Look Buck." Well, first of all I said, "When this ceases to be fun for you, then you don't need to do it anymore. If it gets to the point where it's just work and not a pleasure, then you don't need to do it anymore. Period." And I said, "But when you are performing for an audience that pays money to come and see you and is willing to sit and listen to you, you need to give them your very best." And he was—and I said, "Why do you sing and get to a certain—and then forget the words or do something stupid?" and he said "Well, that is just part of the sickness." Said, "Oh, no. No, it is not. You have people out there and they are riding on a wave. You have got them just riding this amazing wave with your music and then when you do something like that, it crashes. That is a downer. It is not part of what you

need to be presenting to people.”

AW:

We would rehearse—when we were on the road, we’d rehearse. He would say, “I want you to—here’s a guitar part and let’s go over it.” And so we would rehearse, and rehearse, and rehearse and we get on stage, he would do something completely different than what we rehearsed. [Laughter] It was like—

BR:

Yeah, and it is like—so that did carry through, but I think he did—I think he finally did start trying. He never took himself seriously. He would sit around and sing in the living room for friends and things, but it was like—I told him, I said, “Buck you’re not the village clown. You’re not.” I think he was afraid to let people realize how talented, how smart, how whatever. I don’t know what it is. It was—he was always being more demeaning to himself. I think he would be overwhelmed. He would not even understand, because I don’t even understand. I think the internet has taken all of this on a totally different journey than I ever imagined with all of the people that never even met him, but still will come up to me and tell me they’re honored, and I’m thinking, Why? I didn’t do anything.

AW:

As many of us who were close to the two of you have said, we put up with Buck so we can hang out with you. [Laughter] I don’t think you should back pedal that.

BR:

Well, it’s just—I’ve been amazed. It’s been almost twenty years, Andy.

AW:

I don’t even like to think about how long it’s been.

BR:

It has been almost—it will be twenty years in January, and I’m just amazed. I will—people—I’m still getting calls of people wanting to do—Gene and Gary Prescott just did that new CD and Gene sent it to me and it’s—she’s got something in the, on the J [?] explaining things about what an inspiration Buck was, and they’ve got a song or something. It’s like—well, I’ll show it to you in a little while, but it is something about angels and I don’t know. Anyway, I haven’t listened to it yet. Well, I have listened to part of it because Marshall Allen Bailey played it and he played Buck this Saturday, which is the first time I’ve heard him play Buck in several months.

AW:

Now, for the recording, say who Marshall Allen Bailey—

BR:

Oh, Marshall Allen Bailey has been on NPR [National Public Radio] in this area for a number of years. I think it has been—

AW:

High Plains Radio.

BR:

High Plains Public Radio for I don't know—I think he said—

AW:

A long time, hadn't it?

BR:

A long time. Fifteen, twenty years, and he has that Saturday morning show that he plays a lot of people that we know because he plays Western things. I've forgotten. Western things and he plays 'Lady Day' and all kinds of different music, but now that Jenny Inzerillo is playing a lot of things too, she plays several Western people.

AW:

And she's also in High Plains?

BR:

Yeah, and she has a show every morning.

AW:

Oh, really? That's cool.

BR:

Yeah, and when Don Edwards was playing in Pampa, she played something. She played him every day for a week because he was performing in Pampa. So she does give people good radio play if people will access her, and I really like her too because she always brings in some altruistic things that are happening, people that are doing good things for other people. She interviews them, and is trying to promote goodwill in the community and everything. She even went to a mosque with us when we went to a mosque to talk to some people when they were having all the issues earlier this year. Anyway, I really like her. She seems to have the right ideas.

AW:

Good. Those are programs I wish we had in Lubbock. Ours is pretty much, other than the news, it pretty much is classical music, which I don't object to, but I would like a little bit.

BR:

The thing I do like is we have all kinds of music. We have jazz, and classical, and Western, and blues, and it's pretty much a mixture of everything. The thing that I don't like is that some of the things that I like, that I feel like maybe feed my brain a little, those things come on either at real early in the morning, like six or before, or late after twelve.

AW:

At night?

BR:

Yeah, like the BBC News and different things. That bookworm person that I used to listen to in the daytime, he comes on about—you know, he interviews authors and they talk about the book and all that—he comes on like at two or three in the morning. Sometimes I actually do get to hear it, but not that much. Those are the things that I'm thinking, Why don't—and the radio reader, I don't guess they have him anymore. I used to—when I was working, I used to eat lunch in my office and listen to him read a book, and so I don't know. It's just some of the good things other than music, but I listen to it all day long. I listen to music, which is good for you.

AW:

Yeah, we all believe that. So our aside [crosstalk]—

BR:

About Buck, yeah.

AW:

So, you went to Amarillo College.

BR:

Well I went to Amarillo College and at first—

AW:

Buck went—I remember him going to West Texas, and I remember him going to Texas Tech.

BR:

I think he went. I think he started—maybe he didn't stay. I don't know if he ever really ever even

went to class. I know he took the tests and could pretty much bypass some of the requirements, the early requirements.

AW:

Yeah, what we used to call 'clepping out.'

BR:

They wanted him to be accelerated and everything, but he either didn't last very long. He wasn't around very long because he went off—probably somebody came by or somebody that he knew told him to come to New York and so I know he went on a— [Doorbell rings]

AW:

Do you want me to get that for you?

BR:

Yeah.

AW:

Let me put this on pause.

BR:

It might be the guys coming to mow. [Pause in Recording]

BR:

Well all these side things are fun things and interesting.

AW:

Yeah, well there is good—and I don't mind having them on the tape. They're going to be as important a hundred years from now as anything else we say. So this is still the fifth of September and the yardman has been paid, and we're now ready to start back. So we'd been talking about Buck. His, how should we say, spotty record or spotty involvement with higher education. You were going to Amarillo College. Pardon me and Buck tested out of things, but he never—

BR:

He didn't stay very long in any formal schooling.

AW:

And then he went to New York.

BR:

He started hitchhiking. I think when he went to New York, I think he went with Dwayne Tedford and I think they rode the train. But somewhere in that time frame, and I don't know if it was before he went to New York or after he came back, he hitchhiked with Irv up to Canad, and they kind of worked their way, and they journaled and actually, I believe that journal—

AW:

Did some of those survive?

BR:

What?

AW:

Did some of that survive? The writing?

BR:

Uh-huh. I think that journal's going to be in some of this archival stuff. I'm not sure that he ever finished. He wrote about different things, but I remember him writing about Montana. I think they found some fellow that hired him to do some work around the ranch or farm or something and they stayed doing that and just, you know, back in those days I guess it probably wasn't as dangerous to hitchhike.

AW:

No, I was too young to have hitchhiked then, but I get that sense because I talked to a lot of people who—we were just talking in the break about my cousin Jerry that you know from Amarillo High and that was a regular mode of transportation for him. It was just what you did because you didn't own a car, and train tickets were expensive and so forth. I don't know about the rails. You were talking about Buck riding the rails up there. That seems to be a bit more froth with excitement than hitchhiking.

BR:

Well I think he actually—I think they actually had a ticket to go up there.

AW:

Oh, bought a ticket.

BR:

I don't think they rode the rails, and I don't know if Buck ever—he may have done that. I don't remember. Probably not real long trips or anything, but usually hitchhiking, and I don't know if

he even rode the bus, but usually it was hitchhiking different places. I know he hitchhiked up to Montana.

AW:

And he hitchhiked out to California too.

BR:

And he hitchhiked out to California.

AW:

I remember him talking about that.

BR:

Yeah, he did those two things.

AW:

Now, this trip to New York with Tedford or Thedford?

BR:

Tedford. Dwayne Tedford. He was a contemporary. Went to high school with him.

AW:

Is that when Buck was accepted on the Ted Mack Amateur Hour?

BR:

Yeah, it is. He was up there, and when Buck would leave, and the reason I know about his trips—by then—by the time I got out of high school, I had gotten to know Buck as a friend. He dated all the pretty girls in high school, and I didn't feel like I could compete with some of those guys.

AW:

For the record, here for the tape I have seen photographs of Bette in her teenage years, and like today, she's quite attractive so you would've been one of those.

BR:

No, so I didn't even try to compete, but I ended up being—Buck kind of complained because I ended up being friends with so many of his girlfriends because I liked them too. [Laughter] I liked his taste and some of them, consequently, are some of my best friends today, some of the girls that he dated. Anyway, so I know he went to California, and I know he went to New York, and the Montana thing. I know when he got to Montana that they wanted to go over into Canada,

but they didn't have enough money. They wouldn't let them cross the border so they had to turn around and come back. There was some interesting journaling during that time, and at one point in time, I read some of that. I think he allowed me to read some of the journaling.

AW:

After you were married?

BR:

Yeah, I think. I don't know if it was before. It might have been after he came back and let me read some of it. Anyway, Irv Sandlin, who is still alive, would be interesting. He lives in Albuquerque.

AW:

I go to Albuquerque a lot. I'll be there next week.

BR:

And Irv—

AW:

Irv Sandlin? S-a-n-d-l-i-n?

BR:

Sandlin. S-a-n-d-l-i-n. Irv knew Buck through high school. They were really good friends. I think Buck managed to make him angry at some point too, and I told Buck, "You shouldn't have been so hard on Irv because he is such a good friend," and Irv actually learned to play the harmonica. He had a good singing voice, and learned to play the harmonica and maybe even something else, and he and Buck played together and Irv was in that—Irv and John Blackburn and several of them would play around here together when they were all doing folk songs and everything, and Irv was—he's a graduate. I don't know if he graduated for Dartmouth, but he had a full scholarship to go to Dartmouth. He's a really smart guy. Good writer. Probably had a lot more potential too, but he ended up working for High Tower in Austin. He went into advertising and worked. His writing did well in that. Worked for one of the main advertising companies and then ended up through all of that getting a job, and he's the one that went around and did a lot of—when he was out of a job, Buck hired him to go around and do research when Buck was writing that Lee Bivins thing. And by the way, that—I found those magazines that that is in.

AW:

Came out of?

BR:

Yeah, the Accent West and included, I think, most all of those in that Lee Bivins. Of course, it made the Bivins mad and they pulled all their advertising money from the magazine, and so that kind of—you know—especially Betty Childers because it was—that Lee Bivens story is very interesting though because Buck found out those hidden secrets that all of—so many people have in their families, like mistresses and children by a mistress. A few things like that that the family didn't really want to get out. Anyway, so it was interesting and Buck, of course, was honest and wrote about it.

AW:

Yeah, he was not one to write a puff piece.

BR:

Hmm?

AW:

Buck was not one to write a puff piece.

BR:

No, and he thought it was pretty romantic and everything. And I remember Mrs. Bivins because when I was younger, going to the West Amarillo Christian Church, Mrs. Bivins was a member and my best friend's grandmother was Mrs. Bivins caretaker at the time. And they would come to church and Mrs. Bivens was in a wheelchair, and she would have her leopard skin robe around her legs and I was always intrigued. Barbara, my best friend and I, would sit up in the balcony and overlook down below so we could watch Mrs. Bivins with her leopard robe and everything. As it turned out, Mrs. Bivins was very generous with the Bivins' money and the Bivins' land. And when I went to church camp for West Amarillo Christian Church, Mrs. Bivins had offered part of her ranch property for the church camp. And there was—they had some like dormitories for the boys and girls, and the big community place where we would eat and play games, and the chapel, where we would have our chapel and everything. So for several years in my elementary junior high days, we got to go to the church camp for a week on the Bivins' land. And then my dad ended up being a deacon in that church even though he never—I don't remember him ever going to church growing up until I got baptized in that church, and he came to see me get baptized and then my mother and dad both started going to church, and daddy liked the preacher. The reason my dad never went to church is he told me that he had three or four brothers that were preachers, all from different religions, and they would sit around and argue all the time, and he just hated all that. But I don't remember my dad ever not getting up at crack-thirty in the morning from the time I was—from the time he joined the church, not reading the Bible. I don't know how many times he read the Bible, but I know that that was his regular routine. He would get up at crack-thirty, before dawn, make coffee, sit and read the Bible for however long until

daylight, and then began to cook breakfast, which I always liked his cooking breakfast because he knew how to cook eggs without having the lace around the edges. He cooked them—he kind of fried them, but then he would kind of poach them at the end. He would add water to the grease and then they weren't greasy, but they were cooked with the whites done and the yellow still runny.

AW:

That's a technique right there and how did he get the water in with the grease without a big explosion?

BR:

Well he didn't have a whole lot of—he would fry the bacon, and then—or ham or whatever, and he would make very little, it would be very little grease in the pan, and then he would do the eggs on a low temperature so they didn't get lace around the edges like mama's did, and that still is one of my favorite smells. Coffee and bacon frying early in the morning. Waking up to that smell, which I love doing and all of us liked daddy's breakfast, and most of the time when we were growing up, we had chickens so we had our own—

AW:

You had plenty of eggs.

BR:

We had our own eggs and they were gold, and we would fight over the goldest egg and my oldest sister, Phyllis, always won. She was like the queen bee so she got the goldest egg, and then Drew, who was feisty, got the second. Pat and I, we weren't as particular so we—but all of them were gold and to this day, I don't like an egg that's not gold. I don't like those mealy mouth, just pale yellow eggs.

AW:

You are talking about the yolk, right?

BR:

I am talking about the yolk, and I pay more for organic.

AW:

Because where they get that good yolk is bugs.

BR:

And green. That makes—and raising your own chickens, the eggs taste so much better. Anyplace that I've ever lived, if I could find an egg vendor and get homegrown eggs, I would do and I was

able to do that most of the time earlier when people had chickens and we'd get somebody to—and buy them from somebody.

AW:

I one time stayed a night at Trudy Fare's [?] [00:32:02] place when they—down by Azle and Mineral Wells. It was when they had that big locust infestation, and her chickens and the garden spiders—the garden spiders were the size of baseballs because they were eating all those locusts, but the chickens had yolks that I don't think you—you had to take a knife to break one. They were so golden. They were powerful.

BR:

I know we had chickens even in town until the neighbors complained. The neighbors complained. My dad—my mom started out raising chickens and then later on, my dad had some chickens and the neighbors complained because the roosters would crow and wake them up. I love listening to a rooster crow early in the morning.

AW:

Yeah, it's like the only other thing that's comparable is listening to a windmill. Those are great sounds. And cicadas in the summer.

BR:

Yeah, and cicadas, which this year, we've had them.

AW:

We had too. We hadn't had them for a couple of summers.

BR:

I think it's a seven year cycle isn't it?

AW:

Well, but it is also if you don't have enough moisture, you don't have as many that survive too. No, they are seven year cycles.

BR:

Well this is the first year that I have seen them in a long time, but used to, and I haven't noticed it so much this year, but used to. when we would sit out on our front porch, you could barely hear yourself talk because of these tree line streets with the cicadas. But I've seen several this year out and I've also—this year, I've had lady bugs and praying mantis and I have had them in the past, but I've seen more this year than before so I'm excited about that.

AW:

We, as little kids, boy, we loved cicadas. So Mrs. Bivins was good to your church?

BR:

Yeah, well and she left the church a whole lot of money because my dad was the deacon. She left some sort of foundation money or something, and they were able to build little satellite churches around town, and then they had enough money to build that great big gigantic one over there somewhere.

AW:

Is it on—

BR:

I don't remember what street it's on now.

AW:

Bell? It is pretty far out West, isn't it?

BR:

But they started out just building the one on Washington. It was Washington Avenue Christian Church, I think. West Amarillo, finally, that was sold, and I'm not sure what it is now. They built that great big huge one, and I think that church had a division of its people, and I have no idea if it's still a part of what the original church was or if that group broke off and went to some other place. I'm not sure. There's several Christian churches around Amarillo though, and I don't really know which ones came from that branch. But I also know that the Bivins contested her will and they hired some pretty fancy lawyers, and I think they ended up getting back some of the things that she had left to the church, I think. I don't know all the ends and outs.

AW:

And that was before Buck wrote the article?

BR:

Yeah, I don't think he even knew any of that stuff. I know that stuff because—

AW:

Yeah, I was just trying to get it in the timeframe.

BR:

Yeah, I don't have any idea. That was a long time ago. That would've been probably fifties, early sixties.

AW:

Was Irv living here then when Buck hired him to do that?

BR:

Um-hm.

AW:

When Irv was working for High Tower, then Irv lived in Austin?

BR:

Austin, um-hm.

AW:

I think I may have met Irv with Buck.

BR:

You probably have met Irv, and he ended up—Irv had a couple of kids. A son and a daughter, and the daughter ended up being a nurse and living in Albuquerque, and his son ended up doing landscaping being, I think a landscape architect. And I know Irv ended up—he married somebody in the advertising agency, his second wife, and she was very good at what she does. And they—let's see, when—after Irv was in Austin and High Tower was no longer in the political scene, I think he stayed and worked maybe some, because he wasn't one of the ones that had to leave. But then I think he got a job offer in California, maybe Northern. Up in more of the northern part. I think it was California, and then from there, I think they moved into Washing—Oregon, rather, and I think his son, Jim ended up doing his—I think he went to college and did some training with the landscaping architecture stuff. And I think he still lives up in that part of Oregon and I know Irv had a—he was working up there. He got a job and then he was able to retire, and then I think he got real interested in gardening because of his son, Jim, you know, and that's when I think they were living in Oregon or Northern California. One or the other, or both, and then I think he fell off of a ladder and hurt himself, and then I think he had a bad heart attack. And somehow they ended up in Albuquerque, and I don't know if it was because of Linda, because Linda kept working. She was quite a bit younger than Irv and she was really good and liked doing what she did, and so she got hired for these different ad agencies.

AW:

Well, if sometime in the next, whenever, if you know how to get ahold of him, I really get to Albuquerque fairly often, and I'd love to interview him. I'd like to know about his music.

BR:

I'm going to have to see.

AW:

I'd like to know about his music and especially if he played also with John Blackburn.

BR:

Um-hm, um-hm. John might know how, and at one point, I did have it, but I don't know that I do now. I know they came back when John Blackburn's mother had her ninetieth birthday party, and I did see him then, and so I assume Irv is still alive. I don't know. I know John Judge, who did live in Dripping Springs and is a lawyer, I think he kept in good contact. John was around our house a lot too during the political days. John Judge.

AW:

I don't know that I ever met him.

BR:

He's a lawyer. I don't know that he still is, but he was and worked in the Austin area, and it was John Judge and he has kind of an interesting story too. His brother was—when we were living in Idaho, his brother married and they were on their honeymoon in Colorado, and his brother and his wife, they were camping out and everything and they both got murdered in Colorado by an escaped convict, which was really tragic.

AW:

That's odd.

BR:

John Judge's mother taught at—she taught my niece. There's so many connections with people.

AW:

Where did he—where did John Judge grow up? Are they from Amarillo?

BR:

They're from Amarillo and John Judge used to come over. He was married and had a couple of kids, and then they divorced and he went back to law school at Tech. But he used to come over and sleep on the couch sometimes and he was afraid he was going to miss out on something political, so he kind of hung around and he was pretty enamored, I think, with all of that. All the political stuff, and he's kind of got an interesting story to tell as well and he—Buck probably made him mad too. I don't know. [Laughter] You know, Buck could get so persnickety sometimes. But I think they all liked being around, and my house was kind of like Bette's stopover bed and breakfast or breakfast for sure and maybe a bed or a couch or whatever, and people used to just—I don't have any curtains on the windows on purpose because I like—that is one of the best features of this room, and I'm not going to be doing anything in my living room

that I don't mind people seeing. And people would drive by and if they saw people, which there usually were always people, they would just stop and come in and join whatever was going on. And I used to have a round table in that dining room and you could always fit another person. There was a wonderful man that was just great, and he was—God, I've got to think of his name. I met him first and just got totally enamored with him. I went to a great books discussion at the library, before I realized that you really had to read the books. You couldn't just go and listen. You could go and listen, but—

AW:

It wasn't like a Cliff Notes.

BR:

No, but you couldn't contribute anything. You couldn't unless you had read and done all this, and a lot of those I hadn't read, but I loved being around listening, and I could listen, but Wayne, his name was Wayne. He was an older man, but I loved his demeanor, and his intelligence, and what he had to say, and I thought, This guy has got to meet Buck. And so I told him about Buck, and I told Buck about him, and I invited Wayne to come to dinner and they hit it off perfectly. Wayne happened to be like in Washington D.C. when all those young guys were just young politicians. He knew them by first name, all these people that were the politico, the big mucky-mucks in Washington at the time and Wayne moved here because his son worked for the government with the helium stuff. I don't know. Something, when that was going on, and his wife had developed some illness and needed a different climate, and he and his wife moved here and she ended up dying. So he was this widower, and he had been in Washington and been like in charge of the agricultural journal or something. He was a writer and was brilliant. This amazing man. And knew all of these people. And he and Buck just talked and loved each other and he became part of the group that was always around, and he's the one that ended up being responsible for our senior citizens program here because he could call people in Washington, still, and get funding for good reasons, and he did. He was very well thought of and respected in Amarillo, just doing things for Amarillo, but that senior citizens place is because of Wayne.

AW:

What's Wayne's last name?

BR:

I'm trying to think of it.

AW:

I thought you had said it.

BR:

No, it will come to me, but I don't remember.

AW:

Whenever it does.

BR:

Buck was just—and then we had to move away. We didn't have to. We did move away when I went back to graduate school, and Wayne got sick. He was older when we met him. He was probably in his seventies.

AW:

So he was older than you.

BR:

Yeah, he was quite a bit older than me because I was only in my thirties at the time. He was probably in his seventies, because he ultimately died before we ever moved back to Amarillo, and so we kind of missed out on his latter days. But I know that he started going to the Unitarian church and they adored him and he fit in with all that group and went on. I don't know what else he did because I kind of lost track of him once we moved away.

AW:

Did—pardon me. When Irv was with High Tower—or he was with High Tower, I wonder if he would have a lead on the history of the Texas Department of Agriculture that Buck wrote.

BR:

I think it's going to be in that stuff we're giving you.

AW:

Is it? Well Buck said to me at one time he didn't have a copy of it. There may be drafts or something, but because he and I talked about it. Buck talked about how interesting the project was and he thought it was a good piece of work of his, and that when he was kind of run off that they buried it in the bureaucratic tape there. So, and I've made some calls to try to see if I could find—

BR:

Find it, and you couldn't get it?

AW:

No, people wouldn't talk to me about it.

BR:

What is in there, I think, is—it may just be a draft, a copy.

AW:

A draft would be great since we have nothing at all.

BR:

But I'll tell you, one of the things that's in there, that I had sort of forgotten about, is the thing that he wrote about Jack. Ramblin' Jack. Travelling with Jack. And another thing is, he wrote a deal about Stanley for publication and that's in there.

AW:

Oh, that'll be great.

BR:

It wasn't ever published, so those are some. I don't think it was ever published.

AW:

Hedges and I have arranged to have Jack come to Lubbock.

BR:

I know and I got excited about it when I saw it. and Amanda doesn't know that yet. and what I want to do is when he comes to Lubbock, my guest house, which I'm going to show you will be ready and I don't know if he'll be able to come.

AW:

I don't—I think they're—we'll have to wait and see, but I think his—

BR:

Does he have a travelling agenda where he's just going to be—

AW:

Yeah, he is on his way to do several stops.

BR:

But Amarillo's a good stop.

AW:

Well depending on where he is coming from. They may be flying into Lubbock and then driving, so I don't know yet, but as soon as we find out, but regardless, you need to come down for that

show.

BR:

I do need to, and I want to, and I am sure Amanda's going to want to. She doesn't know about it.

AW:

It is the eleventh of November.

BR:

Ramblin' Jack is going to be in Lubbock the eleventh of November. I just found out about it, but I was going to let you now. Anyway, yeah I do want to come, but I need to let Jack know I have a stopping off place now for him that if he wants to ever stop, it'll be here.

AW:

He's still travelling the road with that really nice fellow that he's been with the last several years.

BR:

Is he travelling with the guy that sails? That was in Elko?

AW:

Yeah.

BR:

I really like that guy.

AW:

Oh, we all like him.

BR:

He takes real good care of Jack.

AW:

He does and his current, not manager, but booking agent is Keith Case out of Nashville, who's a good guy, and not at all like your typical booking agent sort. So we'll—before I leave this week, we'll send Andy Hedges some information about that and let him pass that on to either Keith or whomever.

BR:

Okay, because going East and West and different directions, this is an okay stopping off place and it's free.

AW:

Well and Jack just love too.

BR:

Yeah, we would love for him—and if I knew in advance, I might be able to get him a gig at the Chalice Abbey or someplace. I don't know what he would demand because I don't know what they pay.

AW:

Well if they book it, he's not getting what he should get, but if his manager or his agent books it, it's in the fifteen hundred dollar range. I think it's cheap for Ramblin' Jack.

BR:

It is cheap for Ramblin' Jack, but if he was just driving through and wanted to make a little extra money on the side, and I could get him something, that would be good.

AW:

That is a whole different deal. We would have him coming through Lubbock for the purpose of this and it's a Saturday. In any case, that's a long way digression. Buck was travelling, hitchhiking, taking the train up to New York. Somewhere in there, he was in the Marines for a short while. Right?

BR:

Well that comes—yeah. He was in the Marines. Okay, we're still back at Amarillo College. I'm in Amarillo College and Buck would write letters to me, but he would write other people too. Not just me, but I think—I'm not sure. I may have given those letters to Amanda and you probably—I don't know if I gave them to her or if they're in that, but he wrote his sister a letter who was going to go to Amarillo College and was telling her about me, that I wasn't—I would be a pretty good person to get to know or something like that, but then his sister ended up getting married to Mark instead of going to Amarillo College and going to work. So I didn't really get to become a close friend of Sylvia until later when we married into the family. So anyway, that is why I know about Buck's travels. He would write letters because he wrote letters to different people from home, and I knew—and then he would—when he would stop over in between, he would come by and see me because we were friends. And I remember him walking me home several times from Amarillo College when he would be between travels or whatever he was doing, and he went to Tech. I don't know if it was after he came back. He came back from New York. He didn't go on the Ted Mack Amateur Hour. He completely didn't do that. Came back to Amarillo, and Dwayne stayed up there and continued to stay up and married some girl from up there, and then I remember him coming back and visiting us. And I think he and that girl ended up getting divorced and Dwayne came back, I think when his parents started aging and came by

and visited. But I don't think he ever really left New York once he was up there, and I know Buck worked for—I know he lived someplace where he met some people called DeStefano's.

AW:

DeStefano's?

BR:

DeStefano's. Italian. And I think they had a girl that he either dated or was friends with or something because I remember him talking about the DeStefano family and the girl.

AW:

They were in New York.

BR:

Um-hm.

AW:

Okay. I'd never heard that name before.

BR:

Yeah, DeStefano, and so evidently, Buck was a friend of the family and probably was her beau or something. I don't know if they were friends or both, whatever. And then, I went on to W.T. from Amarillo College, and when I went—somewhere in that timeframe, Buck—I was dating a fellow that really—this is so crazy. Buck dated a really pretty little girl named Joanne Pemberton that had a grandmother that lived here, and her mother had killed herself when Joanne was younger, and the dad remarried. It was Joanne and Jimmy Pemberton were the two children. Anyway, the dad had remarried and lived in Fort Worth, and Joanne lived with her dad, and then when she got to be kind of high school age-- you know how, children from divided families—anyway, she wanted to come up here and live with her grandmother, which she did during her sophomore year in high school. And Buck dated her and liked her a lot, and went to visit her in Fort Worth. Jimmy, her brother, stayed in Fort Worth, but he moved up here to go to college and lived with his grandmother, and Jimmy started dating me.

AW:

Did he go to Amarillo College or W.T.?

BR:

He went to Amarillo College. I've still got to go back to the Amarillo College days, and Jimmy was really sweet. And it was an interesting story because they were an old ranch family and he was related to a lot of the old ranching people in town, and they still had their ranch and it was

fun to date him because we would go on picnics out at the ranch. And I liked him a lot as a friend, but I just never really liked anybody as any more than a friend, except Buck because I had this crush on him, and I'm sure Buck knew that. Buck had gotten a little more serious or something somewhere in between that time with me because I was dating Jimmy. Jimmy wanted me to marry him. He even asked me to marry him. I said, "No, I don't love you." I was real—he used to be real outspoken. If you ask the question, you better not ask it if you don't—I have to tell you this story too about high school. I was really shy because I didn't have a lot of experience. I never dated anybody as a real date. I went steady one time when I was in the ninth grade, and I hated it because everybody else was going steady and I thought I should, but I didn't really want to be stuck with just one person and it just wasn't my thing. And I liked dancing with a lot of different people and being friends with a lot of different people, but I was a late bloomer. I didn't—you know those girls that sat around and would be talking about kissing, and French kissing, and I just couldn't even imagine in junior high. Yuck. The whole [inaudible] [01:01:07]. I didn't know how to kiss. I'd never been kissed all through high school. I just—I was—not all through high school, until I got to high school, and so when I was a sophomore, this senior boy named Dwan Abel started asking me out.

AW:

What did you say his first name was?

BR:

Dwan.

AW:

Dwan?

BR:

Dwan Abel.

AW:

D-w-a-n?

BR:

I think so, and he was older, and of course, a senior and I was sort of scared, but he was really nice. I think he met me because I was a favorite. A sophomore favorite, and he was high school—he wasn't favorite, but he was like second to the favorite, and I think we met when we were rehearsing and practicing for the soiree and all that stuff. And so I dated him, and so after I had about two or three dates with him, he asked me if he could kiss me. When I used to go on dates, Andy, I would hug the door. When we would get out of the movie, I would hug the door, and just hate to go to the front door hoping that I could get in the door before anybody asked me

for a goodnight kiss or to kiss them or anything. I just dreaded that part always, and so I never dated anybody very long, consequently, and I think I probably got known as a cold fish, which I didn't care about. But anyway, he asked me if he could kiss me goodnight, and I said, "No," and so he just grabbed me and kissed me anyway. And so I went in and I wasn't sure about any of that, but then I never wanted to go—I dated him for a short period of time and he would just want to sit and kiss. After he'd kiss me and it wasn't that big of deal or anything, I thought, Well this isn't all that big. One time, we were sitting. I would never go park. I didn't ever want to go out and park or anything and I always wanted to get home early. I didn't ever want to stay out late. I was supposed to be home by eleven. I always wanted to be home by eleven. And so we were sitting out front and he said, "Bette, I just really love to kiss you. You really are a good kisser and everything, but I just get the feeling you don't really enjoy it or get any—do you get any feeling from it?" and I said, Well, no, not really." [Laughter] I never had another date with him, which was fine with me. And so then after that I thought, What's the point? If you don't get any feeling, what is the point? I thought I am not kissing anybody else unless I really want to. Now I know what it's like and if you don't have any feeling, no. People would—I even asked some of my older friends that I liked when we would be sitting around, able to talk in a lab class or something and I'd say, "What do you think? Are you supposed to kiss a boy just when you have a date?" and they would say, "It's just kind of a nice thank you." I'd think, I don't think I need to just kiss them and thank them for taking me to the movie or something. I don't mind paying my own way or something. But anyway, it was just—

AW:

You're way ahead of your time, Betty. [Laughter]

BR:

I don't know. I just thought that was silly unless you had the feeling, and so I never really dated anybody very long. I ended up dating all of Buck's friends, but basically, we would just talk about Buck on the dates. That's what it ended up being, so I guess I learned a lot about him. Just not really pumping people, but just because they all were intrigued with Buck and liked him. He was—people loved Buck. They did. I don't know any high school graduating class—well I'm not that familiar with all the funerals, but at his memorial, they sent this huge yellow rose wreath from the whole class of '56, which I think that's pretty unusual.

AW:

Yeah. I remember it. In fact, it was enormous as I recall.

BR:

Yeah, it was a great old big thing and I was just stunned, but he was just really well thought of. Anyway, so where were we?

AW:

Jimmy Pemberton.

BR:

Oh, Jimmy Pemberton. He wanted to marry me and I wouldn't marry him. I told him I didn't love him. He said I could learn to and all this stuff. I never did, but he ended up going away to someplace in the summer and met a girl, a Native American girl, or she had Native American blood, up in Colorado and started dating her and asked her to marry him, and so he ended up getting married, because he wanted to get married. That was—he just had that in his mind and that's the last thing I wanted to do. I made up my mind I did not want to marry until I was twenty-five. Period. I didn't make it to twenty-five, but I did make it to twenty-three. My sisters all got married right out of high school.

AW:

We were. Mary Anne and I were nineteen and twenty when—but we never thought about it. It was the next step. You moved out, you met, and you married somebody. It was like some sort of rule.

BR:

I didn't want to do that. And my dad, when I wanted to go to college, he was reluctant to send me to college because he said, "Well all you want to do is go look for a husband," and I thought, That is really not all I want to do. I had to convince him that no, I really wanted to go get an education. I wanted to become a school teacher, because I really liked my school teacher. She was kind of a mentor. I knew what I wanted to do. I knew what I wanted to get a degree in, and that was my intent, and that's what I did. So anyway, I was going to W.T., and then I found out that Buck had a girlfriend. He told me she was a friend, but then he had kind of—he had—when I was dating Jimmy Pemberton, this is when I befriended Melinda Hagy. I spent a lot of time over at her house. Of course, Melinda didn't like Buck.

AW:

She didn't? So there's one person who didn't.

BR:

No, she didn't like him, and Melinda was very territorial about friends. She didn't have hardly any friends. I really was a friend. I didn't want anything from her. I didn't ask her for anything.

AW:

And so anybody that was your friend was a threat to her?

BR:

Yes, and so she demanded a lot of time and energy, but I got a lot of perks out of it because I got to learn a lot about dogs, and dog school, and horses, and learned how to clean stalls.

AW:

All the things to fit you out for a finer life. [Laughs]

BR:

Saddle horses, and ride horses, and go to the ranch and do roundups, and that was—and I loved going. Hagy owned that ranch in between here and Dumas, and that was a great ranch because it still had all the old gas lights and everything and I just loved that, that old ranch. That wonderful old ranch house. Melinda and I would go and stay down there and that was great, and then he bought the Bitter Creek, and I got to hang around and learn a lot from Hagy. He taught me how to play Gin Rummy and he taught me how to—when you did a white elephant bid, that you always add a few cents to what you bid. Like if you wanted to pay five dollars, you bid five dollars and twenty-seven cents, or something like that, and it worked, because, hey, I got the white elephant bid when I did that. He taught me about being frugal. He was one of the most frugal people I've ever known. He darned his own socks, showed me how to darn socks.

AW:

Isn't that interesting? Someone with all that wealth.

BR:

All that money. Yeah, and I don't think he ever had to buy booze because he got all these cases from these liquor people and if he did buy booze, he got a lot of free stuff. Anyway, he was pretty amazing. He cleaned his own—he never sent anything to the cleaners—he would clean his own ties and suits, cleaned the spots off of them. When he would go around—when he was buying Bitter Creek—Bitter Creek was a ranch between here and Clarendon. It was the horse pasture of the J.A. Ranch, which you would know about, but originally, that's what it was, and it was a beautiful ranch. He was a banker and on the board at the First National Bank, and he had watched that ranch and he told me this, he had watched that ranch for fifteen or twenty years. Watched it go into decline and knew when—

AW:

When to buy it.

BR:

Yes, and got it for whatever. And then, I saw the before and after of that ranch. The things that he did for it. Of course, he bought it for a tax write off, and also as a place for his hunting and fishing friends and buddies to go down there and have their man things, but Melinda and I would

go. We got to go and stay, and swim in the natural springs, and do all kinds of fun things. And then because Hagy approved of me, and I'm sure he checked on me when I befriended Melinda. The reason I befriended Melinda in the beginning was my mentor teacher knew about Melinda and knew all of her problems. She had been in all kinds of schools in California, couldn't get along with anybody or anything, and had been in private schools, and kicked out of different places and so she was just this poor little rich girl. She had been adopted, had quite a story to tell, and I guess her dad had left the mom during the hard days. The drought and all the hard times that were going on. There were about five kids in the family. Melinda was the second to the last and so Hagy and Anne, Melinda's mom, was Zachary Scott's sister, and her father was a doctor in Austin, and so she had her own legacy and money from all of that, but her mother had been from a ranching family here. Sally Lee Scott, the Cricher's, the Fayne's, the Scott's, and Weymouth's were all part of the Masterson family. And old man Masterson had the ranch down between Dumas and Amarillo, and he had those four daughters and divided the ranch up between the four daughters. So the daughters of the Cricher, Fayne, Masterson, Scott—I mean, Weymouth and Scott ranches are all part of that Masterson estate. So anyway, that was the ranch that Hagy leased from the cousins because Melinda's mother's sister married one of the king ranch heirs and so Melinda had connections to the King Ranch. So when she graduated from high school, she was given a king ranch horse and a horse trailer. The King Ranch horse trailer came from—I think her aunt's name was Mary Lee Clayberg, married to Richard Clayberg. She had these cousins that were part of her family. So Hagy bought Melinda the station wagon and the horse trailer for the horse, and I got to go to California, which was very interesting, with Melinda driving out to see her mom who lived—at this time, she had remarried and was living in Ojai, and was married to a retired Naval commander, who had become an Episcopalian priest and they lived in this—

AW:

[Laughter] You couldn't make up a plot like this.

BR:

I know. This makes a great story.

AW:

Was Ojai as floosy then as it is now?

BR:

Oh my gosh, yes. She lived on this big hill overlooking the valley of Ojai, but it was small back then. So I'll back up a little bit, but that was Melinda, and my teacher wanted me to start coming to her during my study hall, and having Melinda come to her during her study hall to get us together to be friends.

AW:

You couldn't escape that. [Laughter]

BR:

No, and so that's what happened. I didn't know Melinda from Adam, but I liked her, and Melinda was one of those people that probably had learning disabilities that were never diagnosed and never addressed.

AW:

Like dyslexia or something of that nature?

BR:

Yeah, and she could—she spelled by sound. She'd spell 'was,' w-u-z. She read, but she had problems with writing because she couldn't spell, and didn't know grammar, and was just too stubborn to—but she was very street—she was very wise about a lot of other things, and had been exposed to the best of the best. Her mom—I mean, this is the place that you dress for dinner every night and you have all the—that's where I learned about proper etiquette with the knives, and forks, and spoons.

AW:

Yeah, how to set at the table.

BR:

To watch the—and of course, I made the mistake I think the first night I ate there. I had this little silver thing by my plate with the little spoon, and I thought it was a little sugar dish because I think I had seen some little small things before like that. And so I put some little spoons of that in my tea, iced tea, and of course, it was like salt. One of those little salt things. I'd never been around one of those and they just laughed at me and thought it was funny because the tea—you know, I took a drink of that tea and it was awful, and I was real embarrassed because I didn't have all those nice etiquette things going on. At the time, I was pretty young and innocent back in those days. So anyway, I was friends with Melinda.

AW:

Why did she not like Buck?

BR:

I think she—

AW:

Just because of the jealousy?

BR:

Just the jealousy thing.

AW:

So nothing else?

BR:

Yeah, and she knew that I really liked him a lot, and she didn't—she just—he never did anything against Melinda, but it was my time.

AW:

Because she strikes me as the kind of person that Buck would find interesting. Quite the opposite.

BR:

Oh, I'm sure he did, but she just wouldn't have anything to do with him. When Melinda would make up her mind if she liked you or didn't like, she just wouldn't give you the time of day. She just—she was—she just got by with a lot. Her family, her mom and dad—Melinda was the kind of person that had temper tantrums and got by with them. They just didn't know what to do with her so she got to have tantrums to get her way and be just as tacky as she could be, and she was. She managed to make everybody mad. Nobody really wanted to be around her. None of the cousins or family. They just thought she was this weirdo that had been adopted into the family, and Eliza actually was adopted before she was born.

AW:

Eliza?

BR:

Eliza's her little sister and Eliza ended up—

AW:

But Melinda was older when she was adopted? She wasn't an infant?

BR:

Yeah, she was probably about two, I think. Eliza hadn't been born, and they were going to take her no matter what, whether she was a boy or girl, and she ended up—now, the mother told me—and I am not sure because I never got to see the medical records or anything, but she had

measles. I don't know if Eliza had measles or the mother had measles. I'm not real sure, but there was some question about whether she would—I think Melinda's mom told me that Eliza had measles, and her fever got high, and they were concerned about the possibility of some brain damage, but they opted to take her anyway, and sure enough, there was brain damage. Eliza was—I don't know the right terminology anymore. I'm going to say mentally challenged. I don't think that's the term they use anymore now, but they keep changing it. She probably had the mind of—she was just like a lot of mentally challenged people. She had amazing skills in some directions and not some in others. She was very musically talented. She could sing and remember all the songs. She could remember anything you ever wore the first time she saw you. She was very in tune to colors and a lot of things that you just wouldn't think about, but her mental capacity, I think, was not even a six year old in some ways and she couldn't read or write or do any of those things. But she was delightful, and I ended up being a caretaker for Eliza in college, and even when she'd come home for vacations and things like that.

AW:

When you were going to college?

BR:

Yeah, when I was going to college and I was on—you know for Christmas vacation and stuff like that, so that worked out real well because we did a lot of things with Eliza, Melinda and I. So anyway, that was—but Melinda, on this trip which I should write about someday because it ended up being extremely interesting. We had this horse, and of course, we always had to find a place for the horse.

AW:

You couldn't just stop at any hotel.

BR:

Oh no. We had to have a place that the horse could stay, and Hagy was very good about helping with planning things. So he had planned some stopovers and some places that we could stay and I got to go through Oak Creek Canyon before it was all built and messed up, and we stayed in this cabin and got to fish and do wonderful things. It was beautiful and we went to Grand Canyon and got to stay there. Unfortunately, this is where Melinda met husband number one, which he turned out to be. He was a Mormon from Utah or Arizona and his name was Lee Mathias and he was—he saw—

AW:

Money.

BR:

He saw the horse trailer. He saw the station wagon, and he knew how to work the system, and Melinda decided that she was going to take a little side trip with Lee. He wanted to show her something somewhere. I don't remember exactly, and I opted not to go. We also had Melinda's dog, Lyric, who was a big German shepherd.

AW:

Lyric?

BR:

Lyric, travelling with us. So I opted not to go on the trip. I didn't want to go off gallivanting around with Lee, and so I stayed at the Grand Canyon, and luckily at the Grand Canyon, they would have these gatherings at the big community place where people go. Visitor's place. They would have music, and dancing, and activities, and things like that in the evenings, which I liked to go to and so I would go up there and spend my time in the evening. Lyric was a very well behaved, good dog, and I had Lyric. But the second day that Melinda was gone, I learned that I couldn't stay in the place that we had been staying.

AW:

They had it rented out?

BR:

That was reserved—that Hagy had reserved ahead of time, and Melinda had left me with the dog and all the suitcases.

AW:

And the horse.

BR:

No, the horse, she made sure it was boarded. She boarded the horse somewhere because Hagy had figured out where the horse could be boarded. Blah, blah. I didn't have to worry about the horse, but I had all the suitcases and the dog, and I was being evicted from the place that I was staying until Melinda got back. She was supposed to be back like the next day or so, which she didn't come back. So I was there and I thought, okay they said I had to be out by—certain things. So I call Mr. Hagy, well of course, Mr. Hagy made some calls and found me a place. They told me there wasn't any place or anything, but he managed with his pull to find me a place because people rent things like months, maybe years, in advance.

AW:

Sometimes years, right.

BR:

So the people were nice after Mr. Hagy straightened things out and gave them, told them to let me have what I needed or whatever, moneywise, because I didn't—I had some money, but I didn't have money to pay for all that, and he just said he would take care of it. So that turned out to be nice, but anyway, they put me in a cabin that had one lightbulb. It was one of the original cabins, that had the windows that opened up outside with screens and one lightbulb, but hey, I had a place. I had Lyric. So the only difficult thing is, that coming in at night from the community thing and you had to walk down kind of in the dark, between things, I'd have to try to find that string in the black of night and it was kind of hard to do, but I did. The other thing is, I had college boys on both sides of me partying the whole time, and I was just barely graduated from high school, seventeen. And I was a little leery about staying in the middle of drinking, rowdy, wild college boys out having their summer fun. Luckily, I ran into a kid that I liked a lot up at the community center. He saw me hanging around because I was kind of hanging around there a lot day and evening until it was closed down for lack of—got to see a lot of Grand Canyon, and do all of whatever tourists get to do, and he was from—what is one of the major families in that part of the country?

AW:

In Arizona?

BR:

Yeah, one of those wealthy families. It's in one of those books by John Updike. One of those long names. Babbitt.

AW:

Babbitt.

BR:

He was a Babbitt.

AW:

Wow. That is a big deal.

BR:

And he was the nephew of the big guy at Grand Canyon, so he was a nice guy to know, but he also had very good manners, and was very gentlemanly, and very kind, and always walked me home at night through the dark with Lyric, made sure I got into my cabin okay, and was just really sweet, and told me his story. His mother had sent him to the canyon to work for the summer and he was one of these poor little rich kid boys.

AW:

You were surrounded by them. [Laughter]

BR:

That got sent to boarding schools and you know, all this stuff. Yeah, so I got his story. I really liked him. He was nice. I didn't know a darn thing about the Babbitt's and could care less about them in Arizona, but he informed me, and told me, so that was interesting. So then I went—I was staying there and so finally, one morning, I slept in my clothes—

AW:

How long—how many days was this?

BR:

Well it was several days. I don't even remember how long, but by the time Melinda got by back, I was pretty miffed for having been left.

AW:

Why did you sleep in your clothes? I am just curious.

BR:

Because I was afraid to get undressed. I didn't know what was going to happen, and it was dark, and I don't like the dark and being by myself, I was just—I didn't know. I just slept in my clothes because I was too scared to do anything else. I didn't want to unpack. I was just trying to hang on and try to make it through. She came walking in, looked around, and the first thing she said to me, which really made me so angry, "What the hell are you doing in a dump like this?" That is what she said, and I said, "Don't you dare. You will not believe what I have been through." And she just laughed when I was explaining all this stuff and just thought it was so funny, and she had had this great time and Lee had done this and then done that and blah, blah. Oh boy. So anyway, we finally left. Went to California. Started dressing for dinner and doing all the right things, and we had planned to stay in California with her mom.

AW:

For the summer?

BR:

Yeah, and just start to school out there. Both of us.

AW:

Oh, to stay? Like stay?

BR:

Yeah, we were going to stay and go to—you know, start to go to junior college or whatever. Just go to school, and stay with her mom for a while. Well, I think we had been there maybe two nights, maybe three, and Melinda and her mom got into a disagreement, and Melinda was not going to put up with it. Just going to leave. I was in a pair of shorts. This was in the daytime. It was in the morning, probably after we'd been there a couple of nights, and I was liking having all this wonderful experience of how the other part lives and learning a lot. And we got to—and Melinda was just hell bound and determined that she wasn't going to stay, and I jump in the car with her in a pair of shorts, and we got to San Luis Obispo and I don't know how far that is from Ojai, and she would not change her mind, and I would not go. I was not going to leave and go back to Leeland and all that mess. I knew that was not what I wanted to do, and so she left me again.

AW:

In San Luis Obispo?

BR:

St. Luis—San Luis Obispo. Yeah. It was not Saint, it was San Luis Obispo.

AW:

Well, I've got to say, it's an awfully nice place to be left. I always liked it. [Laughter]

BR:

Yeah, both places. Grand Canyon wasn't a bad place if I'd of just been able to stay without having the janitors and the laundry people having to move all my suitcases and all that other stuff. Remember, I was just seventeen. I hadn't really been that many places in my life so anyway, I called Melinda's mom and she comes to pick me up, and of course, she's very upset. I'm upset, but her mom has me go ahead and stay for a vacation. A couple of weeks. I'm not sure. Two or three weeks. We had a lot of fun. We'd go to the beach.

AW:

What did you do?

BR:

Well we went to the beach. We went to the Brown Derby. I met lots of movie stars.

AW:

That's pretty floosy.

BR:

Yeah, and I met that old—you know, the mom was introducing me to all these people because she was Zachary Scott's sister, of course, and was familiar with a lot of these older people. I saw Greta Garbo on the elevator. Was not impressed with Greta and her—I don't know how many dogs she had. Seven or eight dogs. And her little boy toy guy with her. She wasn't the elegant beautiful woman at the time. She was just this old, grey headed woman that was sort of uppity and wanted to be left alone. So I wasn't all that impressed with her. I did think she was quite beautiful in her early movies and all of that, but I didn't know all that when I was seventeen. So anyway, this old guy had a real strong brogue, and he was always playing like the butcher or something in these movies. I cannot think of—

AW:

A character actor?

BR:

Yeah, I can't think of what his name was, but I met him and then I met Charles Lawton.

AW:

Charles Lawton?

BR:

Yes, and he—I had on this pretty little peasants dress, and you know, I used to have big boobs before I got breast cancer.

AW:

[Laughs] Yeah, before they took them away.

BR:

Yeah, before I—yeah. I never did like that because I got a lot of attention at my boobs by the high school boys, and the guys that would look. Consequently, I maybe wore sweaters a few times when I was a sophomore, and never wore sweaters again in high school. I always tried to wear things that didn't show. Of course, my décolletage was way up high.

AW:

Sundress or a peasant dress, yeah.

BR:

You couldn't get too high because you still had a little bit of that. Well, I had on this dress that was modest, but you could tell that I had big boobs, and this Charles Lawton stuck his card down, and I never liked him again after that. [Laughter] I always liked him as a character actor

before, but then after that, I just thought, He's just an old man. A dirty old man. When I was seventeen that's what I thought. Anyway, so I had my wealthy California experience.

AW:

Quite a summer.

BR:

Yeah, quite a summer at the beach, going to the farmer's market, doing lots of fun California things. Of course, her mom was a really good host, and I had a good time, and then I came home and started Amarillo College. And I got real interested in Amarillo College and started making friends and joining a sorority. You know, doing all the things kids did back then and having fun. Having a good time. I loved school and loved my friends and then—and that's when Buck started coming back. Probably somewhere during my sophomore year in college, and I had my first date with Buck.

AW:

Just real quick, Amarillo College was then also a two year college? So you went both of those two years to Amarillo College before you went to W.T.?

BR:

Yeah, I was a freshman when Buck started coming back because he came back from New York, and he may have gone in the summer with Irv before because he was a year ahead of me. Probably in that year when I was still at Amarillo High and sometime in the summer and end of the fall because they were working like in the hayfields, wheat fields, whatever, up in Montana, I think. I remember that. Anyway, so I had my first date when I was a freshman in college with Buck and I asked him because it was Corrigan Week. (1:46:54)

AW:

Explain Corrigan Week to—

BR:

Corrigan Week was when the girls could ask the boys for a date.

AW:

By the time I got to high school, we called it Sadie Hawkins Day.

BR:

Yeah, it became Sadie Hawkins Day later on. By the time I was a senior in college, it was Sadie Hawkins Day.

AW:

I like Corrigan Week. It sounds better.

BR:

Yeah, Corrigan Week. That's a little more intriguing. Isn't it?

AW:

Yeah, Sadie Hawkins sounds like you're poor. Lower class.

BR:

Daisy May, little Abner all that. Anyway, so—

AW:

So you asked him out?

BR:

Yeah, and we were having something at the college. I don't remember what now, and I needed a date, and Buck was around, and he was my friend, so I asked him out. And that was our first date. After that, we had some more dates, and that's when, I told you, I was staying with Melinda. That would have been my second—you know, Corrigan Week wasn't until the second semester of my freshman year, and that would've been when Melinda was around. It might've been the first because I think I may have had some—I didn't really have that many dates with him, but I had some. Usually, it'd just be walking me home or talking or visiting and just here and there, and so I think Buck maybe was trying to go to W.T. by then too and may have been enrolled in W.T. probably not my first year, but my second year in college. Anyway, somewhere during that time when I was in college, either my first semester—I don't think Melinda came back until my second year in college, so this must have been my sophomore year in college, I think. I'm pretty sure it was now. Melinda was back and we were friends again. My freshman year, I went up with Hagy because I was already in college and everything and it was by Christmas, I think, Melinda had decided to marry this guy that she had been living with.

AW:

Lee?

BR:

Lee Mathias in Arizona. She was going to get married, so Hagy arranged for them to be married at the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver. And he had a bottle of champagne that he had saved from World War II for this special occasion. And Melinda wanted me to be her bridesmaid, and so he made arrangements for me to fly up to Denver with him, and stay at the Brown Palace, and be the bridesmaid, and have the wedding, and drink the champagne, and the whole thing. So that

was a really nice experience, except at that time, I didn't drink and I didn't like the champagne. I'm so mad at myself now because that was probably a really good chance to have to have—

AW:

Probably a very good bottle. [Laughter]

BR:

I love champagne now, but back then I just didn't really like any of that stuff, and that was when I was in California and we went to the wine places and they brought me wine and I didn't like any of that either. Probably very good wine, and I just didn't have very much sense back then.

AW:

Well, we have to learn things, you know?

BR:

Yes, we do. So anyway, that was a neat experience and probably—I don't know—probably somewhere I might—I don't know if I kept those pictures or not, but I probably had some pictures of us at the wedding, but I'm not sure I still have them. I'm not sure I kept them. I haven't run across them, but they may be in something somewhere.

AW:

So how long did that marriage last? Was she still married when she came back your sophomore year?

BR:

No. So it was like pretty—it wasn't terribly long now that I think about it because she came back. It was—because we—I think she might have entered the second semester of my sophomore year and she married toward the beginning—I say, by Christmas, I know. It seems like it was right at Christmas or might've been Thanksgiving, but it was fairly early in the college year.

AW:

Next year.

BR:

It was the next year. Yeah. And so it would have been my sophomore year that I had my first real date with Buck, but we had become really good friends, and I had that date with him, and Corrigan Week must have been the first semester instead of the second. I thought it was the second, but it was probably the first. I don't remember when the week was, but anyway, we had this date, and then we dated some more, but I was dating Jimmy Pemberton. Well, if I was dating

Jimmy Pemberton—he didn't really get married quite that soon, but he married that girl. He must have come back and married her later. I'm getting kind of confused. It's hard to remember that many years ago because there was a cross time when I had a date with Jimmy Pemberton, and Buck had asked me out as well. So I made arrangements to get home from—because Jimmy Pemberton and I were going to go do something in the daytime, and I was going to get home before I had a date with Buck and they ran into each other.

AW:

So you went from no dates to having to have them choreographed. [Laughs] That summer in California really—

BR:

But I never—I was always honest with Jimmy Pemberton. I didn't love him, and I liked Buck. Well I don't know if I told him all that, but I think he knew. I think by then people knew. Anyway, somewhere in that dating is when I said that—I was staying with Melinda and I remember this very well because I walked in Hagy's front door and that big winged back chair and I think I told you this story already. Didn't I?

AW:

Some of this Hagy stuff you told, but I don't remember the winged back.

BR:

You don't remember the story about me. I walked—he had a big winged back chair right by the front door that when you walked in, it was—he had a fireplace and the winged back chair was kind of at an angle next to the fireplace and the other chair was—you know, kind of a conversation area around the fireplace in the living room. And I remember when I came home from this date with Buck, and I don't remember what it was or what we did or anything on the date, the real date. I just remember he kissed me at the front door, and that's when I felt all the bells and whistles I told you about, and was weak in the knees, actually. Just kind of—and I remember walking in the door. I mean, going into the door and grabbing that winged back chair so I could stand up, because I felt like I was just going to fall. That was really stupid, but I know. I had all this emotional feeling that had been built up, and I'd never felt like that before, but that was a great feeling to feel and Melinda walked in. She heard me come in and walked in about the time I was standing there holding onto that chair, and she said, "What in the hell is the matter with you?" and I told her, and she started laughing at me and said, "You are—" she just never could believe that I was so crazy, stupid. I think she thought I was so stupid. So anyway, that was what I would consider a kiss that I really—it was like a kiss, you know? What you're supposed to feel like. So I thought well hey, this is what it's supposed to feel like.

AW:

Right. An awareness when you realize, Oh, this is what they mean.

BR:

Yeah, this is what they mean. So anyway, Buck and I had this kind of little bit of a romance after that for a little while. And then I was planning on going to Amarillo College. I mean, to W.T. when I got through with Amarillo College, and by then, I think Melinda—I was keeping Eliza during the holidays and summer. So I was still having some contact with Melinda and Eliza and doing things, but I think Melinda, after she was divorced, I think she ended up meeting some guy, and I don't really remember where she met Don, but she met Don, who was this big old guy. And he really liked Melinda for Melinda. She was just a little off the wall person and she really liked him, and he was just this poor kid that was raised on the East side of town. His mother took in ironing to help supplement the income and she was big too. There was a weight issue in the family, and Melinda was pretty much kept busy with him, and I was doing college stuff, but I was also doing Melinda's stuff some, and then, I'm trying to think. Somewhere in that interim, Melinda got—she had a car. Let's see. She had a car that was stolen and we ended up—I ended up chaperoning Don and Melinda to San Diego.

AW:

San Diego?

BR:

Yes, and we flew out there because they found her car and they were going to have to—

AW:

Oh, they found the stolen car?

BR:

Yes, and they were going to have to drive it back. I think Melinda, after she divorced Mathias, Hagy bought her this beautiful pink, kind of a really pretty pink, glimmering Buick, fancy-schmancy car. That was the car that got stolen, and so we were going to fly to San Diego and drive back from San Diego, and I was the chaperone.

AW:

Now, just out of curiosity, she had been married and divorced already once? Why did she need a chaperone?

BR:

I think she just wanted me to go along with them.

AW:

Oh, okay. So it wasn't a matter of Hagy said she's got to have a—

BR:

No, no. I think it was just—and maybe Hagy felt better with me going along. I think he sort of trusted me to some degree.

AW:

Yeah, I mean, who knows where she would wind up?

BR:

Oh yeah. So anyway, we ended up getting to do San Diego things. Going to the zoo, eating at some pretty nice places, going over to the Isle of—

AW:

Santa Catalina.

BR:

Santa Catalina and staying in the big wooden place over there and doing all the California things. So that was another nice perk that I ended up getting.

AW:

Did you do the glass bottom boat?

BR:

I didn't do it. I didn't do the glass bottom boat then, but I have done the glass bottom boat when I went to Isla Mujeres with my sister.

AW:

I got to say, as an eight year old or seven year old, whenever it was I did it. It wasn't what it was cracked up to be to me. I was a little disappointed.

BR:

I remember doing a lot of dancing on the glass bottom boat with my sisters when we went to Cancun, which was lots of fun. Dancing in our muumuus at the—actually, our Mexican—I guess they call them lounge clothes now, but we called them muumuus at the time, but they were those pretty—

AW:

Loose.

BR:

All embroidered. Everything that you could buy for ten dollars back then. So anyway, that was a lot of fun. So anyway, we did that and that was fun, but Melinda ended up marrying Don, and Hagy ended up funding a business, like a rental business that was very lucrative. Melinda was occupied with marriage, and ultimately, having children and all that, and I was still taking care of Eliza off and on throughout some of that and seeing Melinda some, but I was real busy at W.T. and this was—I had found out before I went to W.T. that Buck had been telling me about this girl that he said was just a friend that I should meet or get to know a little bit, and her idea was they weren't just friends. They had this serious relationship, and were in love and all this stuff. So I thought, Well okay, I guess—

AW:

So you found this out when you met her?

BR:

Yeah, after talking with her and getting her point of view of it, and I thought Well, I'll just keep on being friends with Buck. If he loves somebody else, that's—and I kind of spent—it was summertime, so it must have been before I went to W.T. The summer before I went to W.T., I went to Dallas and spent the summer helping my sister, Phyllis, whose husband was in seminary in Dallas. At Dallas Seminary learning all about becoming a preacher because they had become very zealous Christians, and Harold was very smart and wanted to do more with his life. So they were living in Dallas and they had gotten this big old house, and I think it was the school had this—gotten this big house and they had agreed to be the caretakers or the ones that—the house parents, I guess.

AW:

Because other people would live there?

BR:

Yeah, for all these guys that were attending this seminary, and Phyllis did not like to cook.

AW:

[Laughter] As much as you like to cook, she didn't like to cook?

BR:

She did not like to cook.

AW:

Really?

BR:

Yeah, she was a good cook, but she did not like it, and didn't want to. So of course, she invited me to come.

AW:

So you could do the cooking?

BR:

Yes, to stay with them in Dallas for the summer. So I did and I spent the summer away, kind of grieving from my lost love. Oh, I was very dramatic. I have to tell you. It was all very dramatic. By then, I had become friends with Buck's first real high school love Barbara Willbanks, who was this absolutely gorgeous girl, who happened to come to Amarillo College, and who happened to be a sorority sister. And I, of course, was her big sister and we became best of friends, and we had this group of guys that we were buddies with and all went together as friends hunting, picnicking, doing all these really fun things until Barbara teamed up with one of the guys in the group and started dating him as a date. Then I had to just do it, you know, go as the friend to all of them. Just buddies, which I loved just going around with just friends and having a good time. So anyway, that is when Buck almost got me banned from the sorority and maybe even kicked out of college.

AW:

Really? How?

BR:

Because he came the Snow Ball Dance that our sorority sponsored and I had asked—by then, I had known that Buck had this—I guess I had met Jeanie and somehow knew that Buck was more serious than he said he was.

AW:

Oh, the girl at W.T.

BR:

Jeanie. Yeah. So I asked Johnny Walch to go to the dance, and Buck came to the dance. Johnny was from this big Catholic family and we were just really good friends. He was in the group, the buddy group. Buck came to the dance and started—it actually did snow, and we had snow.

AW:

For the Snow Ball? Wow.

BR:

And Buck started—I think he started throwing snow balls back and forth inside. He did something out of whack, and I'm pretty sure that's what it was, but then when our sponsor asked him to leave, and of course, Buck was drinking at the time. He had started drinking by then, and he asked her if she would like to dance.

AW:

The sponsor?

BR:

Yeah. [AW laughs]

AW:

This sounds like vintage Buck. [Laughter]

BR:

It was vintage Buck and of course, she kept getting more infuriated, and more infuriated, and closed down the dance early, and had everybody leave. I got called in to the dean of girls and reprimanded, and told that I was a mislead missionary.

AW:

Now, wait. He wasn't your date, right?

BR:

No, but—

AW:

They knew you knew him.

BR:

They knew I knew him and they—he was—I don't know. I don't know if he was there because of me, but he knew that I was at the dance with Johnny Walch and Johnny and I may have ended up taking him home. I'm not real sure what we did, but it was like—because Johnny was, like I said, he liked Buck. So I don't remember all the details. I just know that I got in trouble, and the sorority got put on probation, and that did not make my sorority sisters very happy with me at the time. So anyway, that was—and then I went to Dallas, like I said, and cooked. It was hot. They didn't have refrigerated air. They had like a swamp cooler in Dallas, Texas, that did not do one bit of good.

AW:

Swap cooler? Yeah, didn't do much good. Just makes you clammy.

BR:

And I was baking pies, and making food, and feeding—I don't know, probably five or six boys plus my sister's family, husband, sister. I think she had probably three kids at the time. Karen [?] [02:14:19] I think, was a baby. So that was my summer, and then I came back and went—oh, and Jeanie and I had met and we liked each other and she asked me to be her roommate. So I became Jeanie's roommate.

AW:

At W.T.?

BR:

At W.T., and Jeanie was—

AW:

Did this bother Buck? [Laughter]

BR:

I'm sure it did. I have no—you know, hey, this is really convoluted. Isn't it? So Jeanie was the daughter of the guy that owned Panhandle Barn Dance, and she had been—she had grown up with that lifestyle, and lived out there by the Panhandle Barn Dance.

AW:

You might talk just a little bit before we move on, for the recording, about what the Panhandle Barn Dance—

BR:

Okay, the Panhandle Barn Dance was out on what we used to call Northeast 8th, but it is now—

AW:

Route 66, right?

BR:

It is Route 66 and it is—it was where all the bars and places were. All the restaurants, bars, motels, everything was all along Route 66 before the interstate came in. So it was a very profitable business and all the western guys went to the Panhandle Barn Dance on Friday, Saturday nights.

AW:

So the big band people would go to the Nat Ballroom and the western people would go to the Panhandle Barn Dance?

BR:

No, in my generation, the Nat Ballroom had already become dysfunctional. I think it may have been—it was like more forties. Maybe thirties, forties at the time.

AW:

I thought it went longer than that so that's good to know.

BR:

It may have even lasted into early fifties, but by the later fifties, no.

AW:

It was over with.

BR:

It was over with, and when I was in college, we would go to the Aviatrix or we would go to—there was a club out on—it was built on an island out—I'm trying to think of the name of that place, but it was kind of a supper dinner club where you could go and have dinner and dance. That's where some of our sorority parties were. I don't remember the name of that right now. I'll have to think about that. Anyway, there was supposedly a lake, but I think it was kind of like a manmade kind of thing.

AW:

They dug something around it.

BR:

Yeah, I think it was like that. It could have been a playa lake that somebody filled in an island. I don't remember exactly, but it was kind of a fancier place, and the Aviatrix is where you went or the Dream Diner.

AW:

The Dream Diner. Now, I haven't heard the name Dream Diner.

BR:

The Dream Diner was where Buck used to sing with the Sandy Swinger's when he was in high school. He was the lead singer.

AW:

The Dream Diner. Where was it? What part of town?

BR:

On Route 66, and it was—when I was in high school, I remember going there a couple of times to the Dream Diner, and it was another one of those supper club things, but the big place was the Aviatrix, and I had never been to—what was the name of that bar that Buck kept get—he got kicked out of? I remember going there when I was in college and dating Johnny Regal and I have a picture of me on that date. I don't know where it is. I'll put it in the group. I'll put it in the thing and that picture is what Chuck was looking at when he wrote—he saw that picture when I let them stay at my house, when Beth and he stayed at our house when we weren't here one time. I don't know. They were travelling.

AW:

You're talking about Chuck Hawthorne, right?

BR:

Not Hawthorne. From Oklahoma. Chuck Milner.

AW:

Oh, Chuck Milner.

BR:

Chuck and Beth Milner were staying here. I don't know if they had—I'm not sure they had one child or—I think they already had maybe Callie. I'm not sure. I don't think they had more than one. They might've. Beth might've been pregnant. I can't remember. Anyway, they were going to be travelling, and needed a place to stay and we weren't going to be here, but I told him to stay. Anyway, Buck—I mean, Chuck saw that picture because I used to have it on the coffee table.

AW:

Um-hm. I remember the picture.

BR:

And Buck's hunt picture. Well, I never did put out when Buck was alive, but I had it out. Maybe this was after Buck died. Anyway, that's the song. He wrote "Bette's Cowboy Hunk" from those two pictures. That's where the inspiration came from. Anyway, so Buck did sing at the Dream Diner when he was in high school with the Sandy Swinger's and he—and that's where, when I was in high school, a couple of Greek sisters had a slumber party. I think this was when I was a

senior in high school, and they had a couple of friends from New York come into town and got me a blind date with their Greek friend. He might've been a cousin or something.

AW:

You mean, you're not talking about a sorority Greek, you're talking about real Greek?

BR:

No, I'm talking real Greek. Yeah, and they got me a blind date with this guy, but they had a slumber party too, and I was supposed to have a blind date with this guy. We went to the dream diner, and I had lobster on this blind date, and these guys were like—they looked like old men because they were already balding. I was in college, but they were like probably in their twenties. I don't know, but had already started balding and were very Greek. Kind of looked like old men, Greek, and we were double dating and I got so sick. I felt like I was going to throw up any minute, and I was supposed to go to their house, and I may have been double dating with one of the sisters. It seems like I might've been—the older sister or something. And they kept trying to get me—this guy kept thinking I was just playing sick on this blind date. All I wanted to do was just go back, get to the party so I could throw up. They suggested going bowling. Of course, I was all dressed up to go to the Dream Diner. They suggested going bowling, doing this, doing that, trying to get me interested. I really felt like if they didn't get me home, that I was going to throw up. They kept postponing, and postponing, and I kept getting sicker, and sicker, and sicker, and I got to that slumber party, and I when I got to that slumber party, I went immediately to the bathroom and threw everything up, and was so sick. I threw up several times during the night, and I did not eat lobster for years after that. I think I got some tainted lobster. I think I just got food poisoning.

AW:

They may have killed it before they cooked it.

BR:

I don't know what they—it was whatever, but I knew I wouldn't eat—I didn't even want to smell lobster. I love lobster now, but it took me a very long time to ever want to ever eat it again. I was so glad that those sisters got to tell those guys that, hey—

AW:

You really were sick.

BR:

--She really was sick. And I was sick for two or three days, and mother was worried about me. She called that restaurant and told them, and I think she probably figured out that I had just gotten food poisoning. So that was my wonderful Dream Diner experience. I think I had a date

with Barney Bales one time and we went to the Dream Diner. He was eating steak and that's when I was too shy to eat on a date, so I didn't eat anything.

AW:

You were too shy to eat on a date?

BR:

Yeah, I was too shy. Barney was delightful. He was a really smart kid that was very smart, but a wrestler and had the cauliflower ears. Good looking kid. Very good looking.

AW:

Say his last name again.

BR:

Huh?

AW:

Say his last name again.

BR:

His name was Barney Bales.

AW:

Bales?

BR:

Bales, B-a-l-e-s. He lived with his mom. His mom and dad were divorced, but he was so smart, and he came to see us years later after we were married. He and Buck were friends, I think, had been friends at the Maverick Club and stuff.

AW:

I was going to ask if they met at the Maverick Club.

BR:

Yeah, Maverick Club. And Barney was working on his doctorate. I don't know if he ever got it or not, but he was sure smart enough to do all that. So anyway, yeah. So that was my two experiences at the Dream Diner in high school, but I wouldn't go—it was the—dadgummit. That club that I would never go to.

AW:

The one on the island?

BR:

It was on the tip of my tongue. No, the one that all the rowdy guys—I mean, all the cowboys, and it was the—I'll think of it. I did go to it one time. That was after I was in college at W.T. and I was older and that was on that date with Johnny Regal and Buck and Barbara Willbanks, his first high school love. The girl he fell in love with in high school. But I went to it another time and I don't remember who I was with. It might've been Buck, but that old Country Western singer, Ernest Tub.

AW:

Oh, Ernest Tub?

BR:

I think, Ernest Tub. He was on the skids, I think, by then. He was drinking a lot, but he—I think that's who it was—was going to be performing there, and we went and I remember they had chicken wire up around the stage.

AW:

Literally?

BR:

Literally chicken wire up around the stage and we sat, and it was real crowded because everybody was there to see him, and somebody else came out before him.

AW:

Opening act.

BR:

Opening act that was really good, that could play the guitar really well and became famous later on. I can't remember the guitarist now. It seems like his name was Jerry something. I'm not sure, but he was a really good guitarist.

AW:

It wasn't Jerry Reed, was it?

BR:

Could've been.

AW:

He would've been very young.

BR:

This kid—this guy was young. I'm not real sure. I can't remember who it was, but he was really good and we enjoyed him. They were back there trying to get Ernest—I think it was Ernest, up. It could have been one of those other old guys that sang. Kind of had a deep voice, I think. They were trying to get him sober enough to perform, and they didn't quite make it because he got out on stage and tried to sing one or two songs and nearly fell off the stage. And that was pretty much—we waited all that time and that was pretty much the end of the show so we didn't get to—that was my experience at this club, which I can't remember the name of, but Buck was banned from it because he fought in this club and they kicked him out and wouldn't let him in for years and years. I don't know. This must have been after we had that double date. Clover Club.

AW:

Clover Club.

BR:

At the Clover Club. That was the name of it. I think it's a Mexican place now. Still out on Route 66. Nice girls just wouldn't be—you know, when I was at Amarillo College, nice girls wouldn't go to the Clover Club at all.

AW:

So the Panhandle Barn Dance, was it a dance club?

BR:

The Panhandle Barn Dance was this big old barn kind of thing where all these guys went to dance, and Jeanie was a great dancer. She knew all the twists and turns and all the nitty gritty stuff, and she made Buck a great dancer. He was a wonderful dancer when we were dating and dancing. He knew all the moves, and was really good, but Jeanie was somebody that knew how to twirl, and twirl, and had the long hair, and was like the honkey tonk queen. And I really liked her, and I would still like her if she liked me, but I think she thought that I had some sort of agenda to steal Buck or get Buck. I did not and I did not encourage the romance, because when I went to Amarillo College—I mean, to W.T. and knew that Buck was seriously dating Jeanie—and Jeanie thought they were going to get married. We were roommates. I remember her talking about it, and that's when Buck joined the marines. That's when he went away.

AW:

Did he join the marines to get out of the pickle?

BR:

I think. I have no idea, but I think he left and went to the marines, and Jeanie—

AW:

Let me interrupt just for a second. Had he been punching cows by this time?

BR:

Oh yeah. When I was—when he came back from—you know, when he had tried that stint at Tech and gotten kicked out of Tech, and you know all that story about Tech. And you know the story about W.T., getting kicked out, that story. Him playing the three penny opera and all these things when he was in charge of the radio stuff at the student union, and not letting anybody in the room, and him playing, and writing to the dean.

AW:

That was at Tech.

BR:

That was at Tech.

AW:

Yeah, the dean must be in need of friends.

BR:

Okay, well I think he wrote letters to the other dean too at W.T. Well, first of all, he got kicked out because of all the radio, playing all the music stuff and then he ended up—but I'm going to tell you that somewhere during all of that stuff going on, he must've been in class somewhere because he was an independent and they had an independent team.

AW:

Independent meaning, like a fraternity?

BR:

Wasn't in a fraternity.

AW:

He was not in.

BR:

He went to the parties and partook of all the drinking and the—

AW:

The merriment.

BR:

The merriment, but he didn't do any—

AW:

He didn't pledge.

BR:

He didn't pledge or do any of that stuff, but he—they had an intermural thing and he played on the baseball team for the intermural thing, and they did all these different sports things, and then they played Bridge and did other things. He and Phil won the Bridge tournament.

AW:

Phil Martin?

BR:

No, another guy named Phil from—Canadian, I think. Phil was from Canadian [Canada]. I remember them sitting there and playing, and he made all of those fraternity boys so mad because these two old cowboy guys sat there through all these different—I don't know—you know, it was a Bridge tournament and they won the Bridge tournament. Buck had played Bridge with Stanley and his buddies during high school and everything. You know, he didn't care about Bridge that much, but he knew how to play, and he and Phil won the tournament. I don't know what all—but the independents, it seemed like maybe they won several different things that the fraternity boys were just—got really mad at because here, these ragtag team, all these independent guys that were shunned by the fraternity boys won stuff. I'm not sure that they weren't clever enough to go get some of the football players when they played the tag football or whatever. The real guys to join them.

AW:

Got some ringers.

BR:

Yeah, ringers to help win things. I'm not sure that they didn't do some kind of rookie doing things around that, but it was—but I do remember. I remember the Bridge thing because I remember watching him for a while because it took a long time for them to sit, and think, and do, and all this stuff. That was kind of a serious thing, and I just remember watching it for a while. That was somewhere in all of that. And then, but anyway, Jeanie graduated. She left to go do her teaching. Her internship at semester of my senior year, and might've been—she was already at

W.T. and graduated early, so it might have been my junior—it was my junior year because she was ahead. Graduated. She took classes in summer and graduated early, so it might've been my junior year. Anyways, Buck was maybe there for part of the junior year. Maybe that's when, and then he left to go to the marines and Jeanie left. No, Jeanie was there. Buck joined the marines. Jeanie was there and he would call Jeanie when we were roommates, but sometimes she wouldn't be there and I'd answer the phone and he would talk to me. and we'd talk, and by then, I was dating Johnny Regal, and I really liked Johnny Regal.

AW:

How do you spell Regal?

BR:

R-e-g-a-l. Just like it sounds. Johnny was fun to date. He had graduated with Buck from college—I mean, from high school and he had—he lived at the Palo Duro Club. His family had a permanent house there, and he still lives there in that house. They've redone it and everything, but anyway, Johnny and Buck were friends and I was dating Johnny, and living with Jeanie, and Buck was dating Jeanie. Because he was there, but he was working back and forth at Malcom's in Dalhart, and he would come sometimes on the weekend, and we double dated with Johnny. Johnny had a car that his uncle had died and left him some money, and he bought himself a nice Chevrolet, and we went to the drive-in. And Johnny Regal is the guy, besides Buck, that I really enjoyed kissing and he's the guy that I really smooched with. [Laughter] Buck and Jeanie were in the backseat and Johnny and I were in the front seat, and of course, we were kissing and everything.

AW:

Sure, that's why we went to a drive-in.

BR:

And Buck said that I was like some junior high girl that had just discovered smooching and that was right. He was right. I was a junior in college and hey, that was fun. And so anyway, Johnny went skiing—my parents wouldn't let me go, which was a good thing—for Christmas holidays. I was real mad at them, but that was very wise. So Johnny went skiing to New Mexico, and it was New Year's, and Buck came by and wanted a New Year's kiss and I would not give him one, because I was being faithful to Johnny. And that really made Buck—I think that really got to him that I would not give him a New Year's kiss, but anyway, he left and that was that. I didn't.

AW:

So wasn't in the Marines yet? He was still punching cows?

BR:

No, he wasn't in the Marines yet. He was just going back and forth visiting and seeing Jeanie when she was out of school. Well, then, by the semester, she was going to go do her practice teaching and I was in school living there. And so when Buck would call, he would call and she wasn't there, then he would talk to me, and then he would come—when she was doing her practice teaching, he would come to—when he came back after he had been in the Marines and done the training camp.

AW:

Basic training.

BR:

Basic training. He came back and he would come and visit with me, and then he would go see Jeanie. Come to W.T. and visit with me and then he would go see Jeanie and we were just friends, and he would talk about Jeanie and I would talk about Johnny. Johnny, when I was dating him, he had been engaged to Sue the year before and Sue had broken up with Johnny and was dating Tommy, but when she and Tommy would have problems, then she would go back to Johnny, and then Johnny would drop me and go back to Sue, and it was like up and down.

AW:

Because she broke up with him. He didn't break up with her. Right?

BR:

Yeah, and so it was this on-off again thing and I really liked Johnny, and so I was vacillating between really liking him and being dumped, and so I would talk to—and Johnny was, you know, he'd get kind of mean to me when he'd be going back to Sue, and probably trying to justify whatever. Finding things wrong with me, and then I would talk to Buck about it and Buck would say, "You don't need to believe all that or pay any attention to him." He would try to explain the boy side. [Laughter] So I would listen to him about all of that. So anyway, Jeanie went away that summer, and Johnny went away that summer to—he was going to be a Marine when he got out of college, and he went away. And then Buck would come around and talk to me, and I—Eliza was coming for her stay, and I went to the ranch to spend time with Eliza and stay with her there, which was going to be—she had to stay a certain length of time for her trust fund and all of that stuff. A legal thing. And so Buck would come down to the ranch to see me, and Johnny had kind of broke—you know, we were kind of on the outs, and Jeanie was away, and he and Jeanie were on the outs because he, I guess—I thought they were going to get married, and I guess he said—well he told me, no, no. But I guess he told Jeanie they weren't going to get married, and so anyway, he started courting me, and making me fall in love with him again. I didn't. I liked him just as a friend and I really liked Johnny, but Johnny was off, and had been up and down, distant, mean. We kind of split up.

AW:

It wasn't like he asked you to wait for him to come back.

BR:

No, and so Buck was sweet, and good, and told me he loved me, and he'd never said that before, and so hey, there I was, one more time falling back for him. Then we started being a lot more serious with our romance, and so that was through my senior year, but he was working away.

AW:

He was out of the marines, but he was working.

BR:

Yeah, he just went to the six month thing.

AW:

Oh, so he was in the reserves. Got it.

BR:

He was in the reserves and he would go back and forth, back and forth. Well so anyway, he took that option, and so he was working with Malcom up around Dalhart and Channing. All that area. Doing his cowboy stuff, gathering information for all that writing he was going to do, and Barbara Grenato and I were roommates my senior year, and that's when she got involved with Joe, and Joe and Buck became really good buddies.

AW:

Now, Barbara. That is not Barbara Wilhelm, though?

BR:

Willbanks. No, Barbara Willbanks—

AW:

Right, so Barbara, what was Barbara Grenato's maiden name?

BR:

Barbara Knox.

AW:

Knox. Just to clear up the Barbara's.

BR:

Barbara Knox is the one that lives in Lubbock. You know her.

AW:

Yeah, right. I just wanted it for the tape since we have already been talking about one Barbara too—

BR:

Willbanks went off—she dated—she was just a sophomore when Buck was a senior, then he left and she started dating a football player that she was real crazy about, Billy. I can't remember Billy's last name. She was always attracted to dark-headed brown-eyed guys, and Billy was one of those and a big football player and all of that, and Barbara was everything. She was the beauty queen, Miss AHS, you name it. Favorite all this stuff at Amarillo High, and so anyway, and like I said, she came to Amarillo college and we became really good friends. But she knew about me liking Buck, and she and Buck were friends and were always friends until he died, and the interesting story about all of that is the year Buck died, that Christmas, Buck had his first love, Barbara, and me sitting at the same table enjoying the holiday season and I thought, what a nice thing that he could experience.

AW:

My wife would've never sat at the table with my first girlfriend.

BR:

You know, with all of us enjoying the wonderful season.

AW:

So that was the Christmas before he died?

BR:

That was right before he died in January. She was here, and we had this wonderful meal with her sister, and her sister's husband, and me and Amanda, and just this great season. And it was—and I think that Jeanie Harrison came in on some of that because she was in town, and that was Joe Fristo's—she was Jeanie Fristo at the time, because she had married Joe and they hadn't divorced yet.

AW:

I haven't thought of Joe in a long time. Wow.

BR:

I know. So anyway, she was—Jeanie may have been staying in our guest house. I don't

remember. I think she was here from Germany for the holidays. Anyway, so and there were a lot of different people in and out during the holidays, but Buck was not really feeling that good.

AW:

Can we take a short break and then start back with Barbara Grenato and Joe? Would that be a good spot?

BR:

Yeah, this is getting—because I'm getting off on all these different subjects, which is what I do when I start remembering. Telling different Segway's and little vignettes of different things.

AW:

As we talked, I think the very first time we sat down, this is not just about Buck and it is not just about you or you and Buck, but there's an extraordinary amount of information about the history of Amarillo and this region. I mean, it's all connected with this, and it's all interesting. Not only that, it's also a great amount of history about what it was like to be coming of age in that time period. It's different. Ten years later, for me, it was a world different.

BR:

Yes, the fifties, it was a very—

AW:

It was quite different than the sixties.

BR:

--Innocent time at least for me. There was a lot going on, but I was away from all that, and the last thing that I was interested in in the fifties was politics and all the stuff that was going on in the world.

AW:

That was for old people to be interested in.

BR:

Not Buck. Buck chastised me some for not wanting to listen to all of that stuff. Buck wanted to go, when he graduated from college, he wanted to go to Cuba and fight.

AW:

With Fidel and Jay.

BR:

With Fidel, yeah, because he was believing that he was trying to do for the people and he was.

AW:

Yeah, certainly better than Bastille.

BR:

Yeah, but then he became—it's like hey.

AW:

The winners always turn out to be rotten. It was the 'who' of my generation. They said meet the new boss, same as the old boss.

BR:

But so that was—and I can remember saying, “No, you don't want—” I had read *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and different Hemingway things and this—well this was when I was—it was when in college and he had already graduated. He graduated a year ahead of me and he had been graduated for a year or so and I was saying, “No,” because I didn't want him to go get killed or anything and be fighting for someone else, and not really—I just—I still believe that there are no winners in a war. Only losers. It's like just innocent people get killed and they still end up fighting and don't resolve a thing.

AW:

Let's take a short break and we'll be back.

BR:

Okay, I have got to go to the pit stop. [pause in recording]

AW:

So Andy Wilkinson and Bette Ramsey back. Still the fifth of September, and we took a short break to take care of phone messages and all that kind of stuff and to plan dinner, the important thing, because it's six in the evening. So we will do a little bit more this evening. When we left off, you were rooming with Barbara Knox, who later became Barbara Grenato.

BR:

So yeah. We had—Barbara Grenato is just fun. She had lots of energy. She had a Plymouth Fury. She was a cheerleader, and knew everybody, and had Coach Kerbel wrapped around her little finger, but she also had all of her professors—she could go in and tell any of her professors that a bear ate her homework and get by with it. She was a business major and Barbara knew she didn't even have to work at being a business—she could type I don't know how many words a

minute—could do all these things businesswise. Very good at what—I don't think she was even aware of all of her talents, but she did all this stuff, and did all the extracurricular stuff as well. So at that time, W.T. was a school that was about, I don't know, two thousand, maybe twenty-five hundred.

AW:

So not a whole lot bigger than Amarillo College.

BR:

It wasn't—no. It wasn't that big. It was a school that everybody left on the weekends. They all went to their hometowns and did their whatever stuff, because they were all from these feeder towns all around. I was someone that, when I was growing up driving to Canyon was a big deal. If I went to Canyon, usually to Buffalo Lake fishing, that was a big deal for me so going, you know, driving like a hundred miles or fifty miles down the road was still a big deal to me when I was in college, because, hey—except for Melinda when we went to our places. I'd gotten used to some big deals, but when we would get in Barbara's Plymouth Fury, we would drive to El Paso for a football game, you know, like over a weekend, and it was no big deal because that girl was used to driving wherever, and we would all just pile in the car and go and we did that a lot. Of course, Barbara was from a farm family, and she had—her mom was married to her second husband who owned a farm. He had never been married before he married Barbara's mother. It must've been a real awakening when he ended up with a wife, a very active, wonderful woman that was into everything, and her four children, Barbara, and Penny, and Junior, and Johnny. Just stair steps. All very active, all going different directions. If you ever wanted to see a couple dance, you should've seen Barbara and her brother, Junior. They could make hay on the dance floor. They knew all the moves, all the everything, and when I was rooming with Barbara, we would get up early in the morning, go over to the student union, turn the jukebox on, dance. We would be at the student union every night until closing time, and we had to be back in the dorms at ten, dancing. There were some of our favorite partners. There was a Korean guy that could do everything. We loved to waltz, polka, do the jitterbug, whatever. He was great. There were a few like him, and then there was C.W.. C.W. was a freshman, I think, maybe when I was a junior and C.W. had some kind of physical issue and I'm not—I don't even know what to name it, but he had a mind that could remember pretty much everything that went into it. But he had a speech pattern that didn't connect with his brain, so that he talked real slow like this, like the movie—

AW:

Forest Gump?

BR:

Forest Gump. He was the Forest Gump of West Texas State, and the freshman class elected him president.

AW:

As a joke?

BR:

Yeah, which was kind of mean.

AW:

Did he know that?

BR:

No, I don't think he did, but I was one of the few people that would dance with C.W. and he danced a lot like he talked, and he would go down the line asking people to dance, and he would get to me and I would say yes. So I got to have a date with C.W. because I was probably the only person that would accept a date with C.W., and of course, this was maybe when I was a senior because I don't think I was—I don't remember. I think I was more dating Buck and he was gone a lot, especially during the week and didn't always come home every weekend, and he didn't care. He thought it was nice of me to be nice to C.W. I think. But then this was during the week and I learned more Russian history on that date with C.W. than I have ever thought about, because C.W. knew all about Russian history, and it was very intriguing to have that date and listen to him tell me about Russian history. And it was just to some banquet or something that he went to, and it wasn't a big deal, but it was nice to have him be able to tell me all about Russian history. And I don't know whatever happened to C.W. after that because he was a lot younger, and I don't know if he stayed in school and graduated. Whatever became of him, I wondered, but I thought it was really cruel for people to make a joke and not be nice about his problem.

Because he obviously had a good brain that could retain information, and was able to fit with our system of education in a way, which was being able to read and remember and he probably could write much better than he spoke. I don't really know. I think his parents were older when they had him. It was probably some kind of thing with that, but I don't really know what it was.

Barbara was nice to C.W. too. Anyway, we just had a lot of fun, but I would go—I don't know very many high school seniors—I mean, college seniors that would enjoy going home to the farm, and helping her mom pick and put up black eyed peas or pickled beets or do things like that. But Barbara and I both loved doing things like that, and so it was fun for us. Consequently, it's still fun for us to be able—I have gone to Lubbock because she still has—she and Joe now own the farm. They bought her brothers and sisters out of their share, and of course, her parents now have both died. Her dad didn't have a farm. He was one of those guys that had something to do with oil stuff where you'd go around a—

AW:

A land man?

BR:

I don't know what his job was.

AW:

Leasing?

BR:

Yeah. Well, he—I'm not sure what his job was. But anyway, the farmer guy died and of course, left everything to his wife and then when his wife died, she left it to her children, and Barbara and Joe ultimately ended up getting it. And their son now farms the land because he's a farmer, and of course, their grandson, their daughter married one of the big farmer guys in Lubbock, and he farms all kinds of land, and then the grandson decided he wanted to farm so he farmed. They do all kinds of different farming around Lubbock and know the farmers, and the crops, and they all do black eyed peas to put the nitrogen back in the soil, and blah, blah. They had a lot of access to black eyed peas and all kinds of other crops, if I could ever make it down there during crop season. They're not real good about letting me know when the corn's ready or the pumpkins are ready or whatever.

AW:

Well, that stuff kind of happens, you know?

BR:

Yeah, and I don't need to be doing all that stuff so much anymore anyway because I have—I thought it was just three, but I think it is actually maybe—not quite, it might be three and a half—freezers that I am trying my very best to empty.

AW:

Golly. You won't empty it if you fill it up more with—

BR:

No, so I have refused. Number one thing is, I have not gone to one farmer's market this summer, which helps a lot. Nor have I made a trip to Lubbock, and I'm not going to do—I'm purposefully not freezing a lot of stuff, and I have tried all this year to give leftovers away when I have something so I don't have to put any more things in the freezer. And just cook what's still good and get rid of things that are in the freezer so I can get down to things that are more manageable. I have figured out, I do not have to feed the world, and I don't have to cook like I did when Buck was alive.

AW:

All the world would stop by here to eat your cooking, Bette. That was one thing—

BR:

I don't have the crowds. I like to still have music, and friends, and cook for friends sometimes. Not as much as I was because I'm getting older. It's harder to maintain the house, the yard, and do all of the other stuff, so I'm just trying—I know I need to pare down, and that's what I am trying to do. I'm working on it. I'm trying to get all the Buck stuff out of here so I'm not responsible for that anymore. I'm trying to get my yard manageable by hiring some people to do some of the things. I've always hired mowing done, which I don't have that much mowing, but I'm hiring them to blow the driveway so I don't have to sweep it and worry about stuff like that. I'm trying to get things more xeriscaped. I've given up the whole North side of my house and cleared back to the fence line. It's all xeriscaped. All the rock garden is pretty well xeriscaped or planted with things that come back automatically. I'm just trying to get things manageable because I don't know. I don't really need all of this space, and I don't know how much longer I want to try to keep it up, and all of that. I still have a lot of nieces and nephews. I have had them through the year, coming and going, and coming back. So when you leave, I have a niece coming, and I just had a nephew with his little flower garden, three beautiful young teenage girls, which were delightful. Rose, Poppy, and Lilly.

AW:

They really are a flower garden.

BR:

They are a flower garden. I hadn't seen them since they were young, and they're now, let's see—seventeen, sixteen, and fourteen, I think. They all have these wonderful tresses of hair, and they're all different sizes, but they all have beautiful bodies, beautiful hair, beautiful eyes, beautiful skin. I'm a very lucky person because there's a lot of beauty as well as brains in my side of the family, and also Buck's side of the family. So I get to be surrounded by smart, beautiful people a lot. In the family, but also friends. You and your daughter, your wife. Everywhere, and I feel extremely lucky about that, because being around beauty and creativity is about the best you can do.

AW:

I agree with you.

BR:

I'm talking men and women, and just people. I love people. I think that's one reason I was so appalled, because I have a lot of faith in people, and sometimes it's hard.

AW:

Well, they are people too. To err is human.

BR:

That's true. We all have certainly made our mistakes. I understand that, and will make more. That's the way you learn.

AW:

That's the harder thing to think about.

BR:

But the world is getting so crazy, and I don't understand a lot of the craziness. I cannot fathom driving a truck into a crowd of people. I cannot fathom making a bomb that has things that disperse into crowds and cripple and maim and kill. That is—I don't understand that kind of anger or hatred at all, and I think a lot of Americans don't. I don't know what people have been exposed to, to have that kind of emotion about someone that they don't even know, and I do understand—I have to say I understand why some people think we are evil, and infidels, and just ugly, awful people. I've been to Egypt. I was on a plane at Christmas time with a plane full of people going back home. It was packed and with all these—just in the airport in New York, I could not believe what people were putting on that plane. People with suitcases that looked more like cargo trunks, and stuffed rocking horses that the poor people in the tickets were trying to wrap in some kind of plastic something so it would make it through the—you couldn't do that now, I know, but at that time you could—through the luggage stuff without getting totally broken. I could not believe it. People coming in with suitcases that they had to start—they'd open them up and everything would just pop up and they started throwing things out of where they had just thrown things in, trying to get it back to Egypt. I guess they had just went on shopping sprees in New York trying to get everything. It was just—and we were in a blizzard, which we had to redirect our flight, and everyone was trying to get a flight here. We had to already spend the night in Washington D.C.

AW:

When was this? How long ago?

BR:

It was somewhere in the—after Buck died, it was in the early two thousands. I don't remember the exact year, but I was going to meet a friend of mine who was in Afghanistan who got to have one of those—what do they call them? Time off away from Afghanistan and wanted to meet.

AW:

R&R [Rest and Recuperation].

BR:

R&R. Able to meet her New Mexico friends and Texas friend in Egypt, and go down the Nile

and that's what we did, but my story is the movie that showed on that plane to all of these people of a different culture—I was so embarrassed and ashamed that they would show that movie.

AW:

What movie was it?

BR:

I don't even remember, but it was one of those stupid movies that shows all this skin and sexual things going on, and I'm thinking why would an airlines show that movie on this trip when some people already think we're such evil people? Why would they want to promote that in any way? That was my thinking, and if I'm thinking it, who knows what the people on the plane were thinking. I don't know. Anyway, now we are, whether people like it or not, we are global, and what we do in movies and on the internet, is all over the world, and we need to think about some of those things. How do we want to be perceived and represented, and when we have politicians out there, they are representing all of us and what do we want people to think of us as people? They don't know us. They know what is seen and represented, and hey—Amanda and I had to walk out of a movie just recently. I'm thinking I thought this was going to be kind of a fun thing and it was just more of what I don't want to listen to or what I don't want to see. It was just kind of like thinking you were going to go see a fun movie and walking into a lot of pornography, and just talk that you don't want to listen to. Amanda looked at me and said, "Mom, it's okay with me if we leave," and I thought, oh good, let's do. So that's all. It's just—and I don't think I'm a prude, necessarily, but I think that somewhere along the way, we need to show some dignity, and some integrity, and people need to know us as being caring, loving human beings, instead of just a bunch of ignorant, immoral doofuses. So for whatever that's worth. That's my lecture for the day, I guess.

AW:

It's worth a lot, is what I would say.

BR:

I don't know. I have said this since I met the Dalai Lama, and enjoyed—

AW:

How did you meet the Dalai Lama?

BR:

Everything that has happened to me since Buck died, I have to give Buck credit for. I would not have gotten to go as a guest to the White House three times. I would not have gotten to see some of my favorite writers, musicians, actors, actresses, in person, be able to talk to them, be able to associate with the Dalai Lama, the Nobel Peace Prize winners. I wouldn't have gotten to do any

of those things, if it hadn't been for Buck. I have had some amazing experiences because of him, and I have thanked him many times for—because I couldn't even dream up these things that I have gotten to experience. Well, do you want me to go ahead with this or go back and talk about something?

AW:

Well, let's see what time it is.

BR:

We can—I can talk about this after Buck's death or we can go before Buck's death.

AW:

I'm just going to make a note.

BR:

There are some amazing stories after Buck's death that I'm still kind of—but what I was going to tell you is that what I'm trying to do now, I watched a documentary on the Dalai Lama, and his advice to humanity is, was, or is still, to sing, to dance, to make people happy, and that's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying. I know that there is research now because I've heard about it. What has made cultures last? The ones that lasted through the years. The reason the Neanderthals did not last and the Humanoids did. I think I've got that right? The Humanoids came after.

AW:

No, actually you are probably thinking of a different group. The Neanderthal was actually us. I mean, we still share genes with Neanderthals.

BR:

We do share genes, but their culture—maybe I have it reversed. Was it the Humanoids? I thought it was the Humanoids after Neanderthals.

AW:

No, Humanoids just describe everything past where you would say they were apes at some point in life. With Homo erectus would be the first Humanoid.

BR:

Okay, the Humanoid didn't last, and the Neanderthals did. Maybe I got it backwards.

AW:

Well Neanderthals lasted, but—

BR:

It's the culture that brought in the art, and the dance, and the music, that lasted and that is still, in my mind, it's the arts that make the soul, and the joy, and the heart of the people, and if you take all of that away, you take away the culture. You take away the hope, the joy, the soul, and that's what people do. That's what one dynasty or one capturing group does to the people. They take away those things plus the language, and the culture doesn't survive. So I'm a very strong proponent of art in schools, music in schools, dance in schools. All of those things, and I think when you start taking that stuff away, that was what was happening when I retired in 2003. I don't know what's happening now, but I hate to even think about what's happening.

AW:

More of the same.

BR:

Because hey, I'm sorry. That is not what the culture should be or could be. All of those things add to everything. They do, and I don't get it. I'm sorry.

AW:

Yeah, well the plain fact is, it's what makes us human.

BR:

Exactly. It is, and it's heartbreaking to see. For me, it is. So that's why I am concentrating on my own humanity, and I have decided that I'm going to just concentrate on the beauty, and the joy, and the creativity. Making people happy. Doing things for people.

AW:

It's attributed to von Goethe, but it's older than that. His statement, "If everyone swept their own front stoop, er long, the world would be clean." So if we want it to be a more human place, we have to start with ourselves, not tell somebody else to do it.

BR:

Yeah, so I'm trying to plant things for butterflies, and bees, and the critters. Trying to be more environmentally correct as much as I can be. I'm not totally there, I know, but I'm doing what I can. And trying to—

AW:

Well, I think this is a perfect place to stop because we started with the birds and the bees and now we're back to them. [Laughter]

BR:

Yeah, okay. Well, let's stop then.

AW:

Yeah, let's get something for dinner.

BR:

We will go eat something for dinner.

AW:

And then, if we get recharged, we might do some more.

BR:

We can get recharged and do more.

AW:

Good. This is fun. I'll say thanks, and I'll stop it at least for the time being.

BR:

I kind of wanted to get that—

AW:

Okay I've got this going again.

BR:

--stuff washed off. Yeah, and I want to say some things without it being on.

AW:

Do you want to do it now?

BR:

Yeah, let me go ahead and do it now.

AW:

Okay, let me put this on pause.

[End of Recording]