

**Oral History Interview of
T.J. Patterson**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sanchez
July 5, 2018
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*African American Interview Series***

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Interview Series Background:

The African-American Oral History Collection documents the diverse perspectives of the African-American people of Lubbock and the South Plains. These interviews and accompanying manuscript materials cover a myriad of topics including; early Lubbock, segregation, discrimination, politics, education, music, art, cultural celebrations, the May 11th 1970 tornado, commerce, and sport.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features T.J. Patterson as he reflects on President Obama's administration, and provides his thoughts on President Trump.

Length of Interview: 00:52:16

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
T.J.'s thoughts about Obama when he was first elected; his experience as a former politician	05	00:00:00
Traveling around the country; likes and dislikes	09	00:10:26
The collective ideas of the Civil Rights Movement	13	00:20:14
How life has changed for minorities since Trump became president	17	00:31:31
Parallels between Nixon and Trump	19	00:37:00
Things in Lubbock that can be built upon	24	00:49:01

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Daniel Sanchez (DS):

My name is Daniel Urbina Sanchez. Today's date is July the 5th, 2018. And I'm with Mae Simmons Park in Lubbock, Texas, with T.J. Patterson, and T.J., thank you for allowing us to interview you.

T.J. Patterson (TJP):

Thank you for allowing this opportunity.

DS:

Yeah. Well you know, we last talked right after Obama got elected in 2008.

TJP:

I remember that.

DS:

And we talked about how things had changed up to that point and what might happen so I kind of want to pick up there and first, by getting your thoughts on what you think of Obama when he first entered?

TJP:

I didn't know of him, but it was an interesting story once you heard about what he had done, how he got to where he really was, you could imagine some good things would probably happen. Of course, there would be roadblocks no matter what he would attempt, but he's been so—man, he left some good footprints in the sand. Very positive. This fellow in office now, Mr. Trump, he's trying to raise up Obama Care, et cetera. He worried about the name. It helped so many people. That's why it was there so.

DS:

Yeah. Well in fact, I want—you know, we'll get to the current administration in a little bit, but I kind of want to talk—you not, gloss over what Obama did. What is the first thing he did when he was in office that kind of caught your eye?

TJP:

He stood vertical. He told the truth. I thought he did, what he believed in. And to me that was very significant. Not knowing of him until he was elected. It made us proud when we watched the six o'clock news in the evening. Ten o'clock news. We saw him being vertical without bowing his head, but being very strong in what believed him. He was a catalyst for all young folk who look like he. That's what he meant to me and I was looking for some good things, but when you look for good things, Satan is always busy trying to destroy what you are trying to attempt. So I felt good about him being vertical, not holding his head down, and articulating what he said.

He never could have made it, and Michelle, who was there with him. Both being vertical. Had the same posture. I felt good about that and I watched the way they raised their children, those two daughters. That was very significant for me. Of course, he had a mother who lived in the White House with them and made sure things were okay. So I felt good about that. I really did. I didn't hold my head when he came to the screen. I felt good knowing that there's a gentlemen who wants to do what's right and what's equitable for all of God's children. That's how I felt about that.

DS:

And what did you think about the—his initial legislatures he put forth and the policies that he did?

TJP:

Outstanding. It made sense. Of course, he had to fight. Nothing comes easy. There's a lot of work involved. I don't know all of them, per say. From that, that I saw, was aware of, that made a lot of sense to me. I appreciate it. They will not be erased. No matter—what I'm saying is Barack Obama was a gentleman that believed in God's people. No matter—from the *Barrio's* [Neighborhood], from the hood. No matter where you came from, you're one of God's children and I think that's the approach he took. That's why he came out like he did. They were trying to destroy him mentally and physically, but he listened above the noise until he could ____ [0:04:06]. It was very interesting to watch him operate. My cousin, who is a congressman from Missouri, he was former mayor of Cleveland. Not Cleveland. Kansas City, Missouri. I was going to meet Obama, but I got sick. I didn't get a chance for that. That's what I was hoping for. To get by and just shake his hand and say, "Thank you, Mr. President." I never got to that. I was sure hoping. God knows best. God knows what he's doing. So I'm proud of what he did, man. God. I couldn't name everything he's done, but just by him being at the gate meant a lot to me. I knew he'd be equitable in what he would see. That's what I saw in that. A lot of folk today don't realize what he was about. What is coming out in the wash right now, right? So I hope that—I don't know how many more years I have. I'm eighty-one years young now, but I'm glad to be here to witness some things that are going to happen. I'm glad to be able to see that, you see. I thank God for that. I really do. But we cannot quit. Dog gone it. We can't quit.

DS:

You know, and you, having been a former politician yourself, how difficult is it to stay above the fray?

TJP:

It was very difficult. You had to condition yourself for that. When you get on an airplane, the first they tell you when you sit down, "Put on your seatbelt. Until we take off, we don't know what kind of incoming weather we may go through." Life is the same way. You had to be

apprised to what may be out there so you learn to listen above all that incoming weather that you're going to be involved with through the day. Once you do that, you don't have all the answers. You don't know everything, but you feel better when you lay down at night and you feel better because you've done your very best. There's always—I look at—I look at the present administration. I think God was involved with that to wake us up. Make us look at where we've come from. Anyway, it hurts me, the things I hear and see. Here, I'm a veteran. The way he talks about military, he don't know a darn thing about military. I was drafted for South Vietnam for thirteen months I went out. Overnight. You see, and I think about the things he's talking about and he go—and Putin. What the hell? Putin can't tell us nothing. Huh? You don't bring the enemy into the kitchen. I don't think you do that. Do you? That's what's happening now, man. It's sickening. It's sickening. I'm sorry. I get excited, but it makes me angry.

DS:

No. That's what makes you who you are.

TJP:

Yeah, I get upset about that.

DS:

T.J.'s going to tell you where you stand.

TJP:

Well we need to know that, man. I worry about these children. They got to go through all this here, and we got folks doing all this crazy stuff, man. Anyway. God knows what he's doing though. He going to be—it's going to be all right.

DS:

Yeah, and you know, I want—like I said, you know, first we're going to talk a little bit about President Obama. What were some of the policy things that he put in place that you really liked?

TJP:

That we're all human beings in America. This country belongs to all of us. Rich, white, black, or whatever. This is our country. You see, like my background is my grandmother was born a slave child in North Carolina. My grandfather was German, and farming. And they married in Waxahachie, Texas. They had eighteen black boys in girls. Some like my uncle looked like white men. My mother was the baby and I think about that. In other words, when you know where you come from, you like some fresh air along the way and Obama, to me, was fresh air for people, especially, that look like me. But yet, he looked at all the people, is what I thought. I was hoping to have—I want to meet him and I didn't get that chance.

DS:

You know, and you have those unique parallels because you know, he was our first Black president.

TJP:

That's right.

DS:

You were our first Black councilman in the city of Lubbock.

TJP:

That's right.

DS:

That was a legal a battle to get you there.

TJP:

It took twenty-five years of _____ the district [0:08:44]. Took a long time. You'd be surprised of all the people who worked for that. You know, I knew all of them, but they worked hard for that. They wouldn't just give it to you. You had to work for that. The League of Women Voters. Jean Gaines [?] [0:09:00] and a few others and the Lubbock branch, NAACP [**National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**]. People worked hard for that. That's why we can't take it so little. It means so much to all of us. Maggie Trejo was my sister. On that council together. When you used to have to deal with her, you had to deal with me too.

DS:

Yeah, and she's going—

TJP:

That's the way we were, way we were.

DS:

And she's still going strong too. Isn't she?

TJP:

I know, she is. Good people because I see her from time to time. I can't get around like I used to brother so I think about that. So, but it's so significant what Barack Obama stood for and his legislation he was a part of, we thank God for that. What hurts me is that they try to tear down now. You know?

DS:

Or take credit for what's going on now?

TJP:

Yeah. You see it, don't you?

DS:

They take credit for what he did.

TJP:

That's right.

DS:

You know, because we were in the toilet when he came in.

TJP:

That's right. That's right. That's right. That's right. Well said.

DS:

Financially, you know, we were way down there. We were economically just on a spiral, and he got us out of that.

TJP:

That's right. That's right. But what goes up comes down. Doesn't it? It does.

DS:

Yeah.

TJP:

It does. You have the example, but Obama made terrific contributions to this country. He did, in my perspective, he did that. He really did. And I was able to travel all over this country, man, and I saw a lot of things. Some things, I liked and some things, I didn't like.

DS:

Well tell us about what you liked and what you didn't liked.

TJP:

What I liked was that America is the greatest country in the world to live. No matter what the problems that America has, it's still outstanding. But we, as a people, can't go home and just sit down. We still got to keep moving towards that right direction. And when Obama been elected,

he gave us that catalyst to believe in that we could do somethings. I really believe that. I really believe that because we treat it so bad, they know it. So many things were happening in our lives that we're not even going to help and they put Obama in the kitchen and he was able to bring up some things, you see. Anyway, that touches me. That just touches me, man, when I sit and think of—a lot of young folks still don't know the history in the black side. They don't know where we come from, how it was. And I was watching a fellow named Dobson on TV this morning, with is this Nazi racist white boy was on that and he was going to tell him, Man, y'all—you conservative folk. You know, you still got them old crazy ideas and stuff. He was trying to break it down to them, you know? You know, it hurts you, man, sometimes. It really hurts you. And I don't have the energy I used to have, but it really hurts me, my brother. It hurts the heck out of me and I don't know what's around the corner.

DS:

Yeah. And you know I kind of had our eye on that, and we knew that there was going to be a backlash.

TJP:

It's happening now, man. They're standing tall with it now, man. They're not hiding no more, you know? Here's a president talking of Nazis credit.

DS:

I know.

TJP:

Ha! I don't understand. I hope people vote this. I hope they vote, man. I hope they vote. They got to vote. It's a must that we do that for our children's sake, you know? It's not fair. It's not equable. It's not really fair. It doesn't make sense, but something's got to happen, man. Something's got to happen. Excuse me. I just—you're touching me. You don't know. You're touching me inside here. I'm thinking about what's out there in the yard right now. That bulldog out there right now. How are we going to tame him? How are we going to snatch him? Put a collar on his neck because he's out there, and he's full believing this is in it ____ [0:13:07]. Excuse me, Lord, for that. But the people believing that fool, man. He's a liar, huh? The good book said ____ [0:13:18]. He's a liar, man. He just tells lies for the sake of telling lies.

DS:

Oh, I know.

TJP:

I don't know and I can't wish bad for nobody because my teacher wouldn't like that, but he's not

fair. It's not equable what he's trying to do. What he think he's doing, but it's not going to work. I won't be here, but it won't work.

DS:

Yeah, and the thing is, it's just not him. I mean, you know, he's got to have supporters in other branches of the government, which he does and so.

TJP:

But they on ego trip. A lot of them on ego trips. I believe they on ego trips. He could appoint another Supreme Court justice. I don't know what I see on that. I don't know what I see. It's crazy, isn't it? But it's just it's real life. We got to live and go through it though. We can't go home and sit down. That's what we're about to do, but we can't afford to sit down.

DS:

Yeah. And you know, the sitting down that you're referring to is mid-terms are just around the corner.

TJP:

That's right. A few weeks.

DS:

How are they going to get people energized to get out there? I mean, what does it take to get them out there?

TJP:

That's a thousand dollar question.

DS:

Exactly. Because I mean, because really, you know, waiting for the next presidential election, it's almost too late. It's got to—you know, you got to reign them in now.

TJP:

That's true. I saw a poll the other day it was. They were showing there was more activity on the Democrat side of the house than there was the conservative Republican side of the house right now. In other words, we shed some importance ahead of what's happening right now. More than the past. We got the numbers. We just got to go. And like this deal with these kids and their parents coming over to this country. That's wrong, man. That is wrong, man. That's not right. Anyways, excuse me. You got me all—

DS:

Well, you know. We both fought that battle.

TJP:

I get upset about that, you know?

DS:

We both fought that battle in 2010 when they started that immigration stuff.

TJP:

That's right. Remember that. That's wrong. That's wrong, man. These children. You don't take a three-month-old baby from his mom, being fed from his mom's breast. They're taking him. You don't do that, man. I don't care who you are. That's stupid, man. They did us like that during slavery time, man. They try to. Make you cry. It hurts because it's not fair. It is not fair. It's not fair. God don't like ugly. He's not crazy about pretty. What goes up will come down. I won't see it, but I got a little four-month-old great grandbaby out there in California and I call her all the time. "How are you doing? Why are you not talking? Is he walking yet?" I didn't know I would get lucky with that little one. You know? I always thinking about him. I want the best things for him, you know? I want that. So Obama let us know in his tenure that we can get there if we come together. If we stay together, things will happen for us. Through thick and thin. No matter how difficult it may appear, if we stay together, we can do it. I look at the east side of Lubbock, we talk about what we don't have. Hell, we're wealthy over here. You know, the best terrain. You know? This old elementary school, Ella Iles, you know where it is?

DS:

Um-hm.

TJP:

Every time I don't drive in the morning, I ride by there. I don't see no tarnish on the building. I don't see no graffiti on the building. I don't see no broken windows. I said, "We don't have—that's—why don't we do something with that?" Not making sense. Well what do we use? Because when I came here, that building was an elementary school. It became a high school, but them old poor black folk whose kids were going there, they prayed and looked after their building. Can't we do the same thing there? Quit saying what we don't have and start using what God has given us. That's what hurts me, brother. No matter how much legislation you pass, you got to have some folk come down and reason together and say, "Let's do something together. Let's make it happen." And it will happen. I believe in that. I believe it can. Quit saying what we don't have. These folks trying to take us go far from west and south, use the terrain God has given us. On the east side, this is the highest point in Lubbock, especially at the corner of Cedar and East 23rd. The highest point. Water goes downhill. So why are we complaining so much,

man? Why? I don't mean to make a bother, but it irks the heck out of me. Why can't we use what we got and make something happen? We can do it. You know, and I've put thirty-one years, I've been going to jail on Christmas. I miss one time. And I look at them young folk, they don't even know why they're in there. Do they? They don't know why they're there and they're trying to—why do we keep falling for all this jazz, man? Why? Why do we keep doing all this? There's no shortcuts in life, what I'm saying, brother. You got to go mountain. One of the worst whopping momma gave me. She said, "Boy, I don't want no more shortcuts in life. When I send you to the store, I want you to go this way to the corner and go up." I used to go across the field. When I came in one day, she whooped me so hard. I don't take shortcuts going to the store. I go until the end of the block and then go up. Our kids thinking there are shortcuts in life. You don't make it like that. You got to go all the way, brother. Do it the right way. That's the way I see it. Man, that's the way I see it. There ain't no shortcuts. That's why the jails are so full, man. Don't make no sense. Getting rich off of us. We don't need all of that, man. Dog gone it. We don't need all that. We need some folk in the neighborhoods that quit going that way and that's coming together collectively and help each other. That's what we got to do. To me, that was a catalyst in my life and what Obama was about. Seeing what we have going for us all right. It's not always in legislation. It's the idea of family coming together, man, and doing something collectively. Can't do it by yourself. You know, I believe that. That may be crazy, but that's what I believe. That's what I believe, man. That's what I believe.

DS:

You know, there was a moment in time when there was a collective during the Civil Rights period, which you were a part.

TJP:

We came together.

DS:

When you came together and you were a part of that.

TJP:

That's right.

DS:

What lessons did y'all learn from that can y'all kick up and kind of restart nowadays?

TJP:

Well us old folk about gone.

DS:

I know.

TJP:

Those of us that believed in that, many of us about gone now, and these young folk believe it's about the dollar bill, man. That's not the answer. Can't take nothing with you, but you can build something together. Something collectively together. That's what hurts me. We see the wrong picture. We see the wrong things. We don't see what's really there, you know? The Good Man upstairs, the God I serve didn't bring us this far to leave us. But we got to get up off our bending knees and start doing some things together. I don't care. Black, white, or brown. We're God's children, man. I don't care what folks say. But we got to believe that and you believe that by doing somethings collectively. Not by yourself, but do it with some help and there's some help in Lubbock, man. Why do we keep saying what we don't have in east Lubbock? Oh, come on now. We can get anything we want if we want it bad enough. We don't get—we don't use the proper resources that are always—that are here, are available for us. Even things that Obama said for—we don't even use what's already here. Am I making sense to you? But once we start utilizing what God has made, has given us, things will be better. I believe that. Like I said, I may not be around to see it, but I know it's going to happen one day. I believe that God knows. I believe that. Is it crazy what I'm saying?

DS:

Oh, you're speaking from experience.

TJP:

That's what I—it's there for us, man. Quit saying what we can't do and start claiming what we want. Claim it and things will happen. I believe that. God knows I believe that, but we got to do it because us not believing our children are suffering. They're suffering. They're suffering. They're suffering. We got to change that. We got to change that. We got to change it, man. In your area, where you live, taught the same stuff. The kids are going to win and not a thing I don't even want. No, couldn't use it no way. But make it possible for them and you make it possible for them by showing what you're about, you see? And be strong. Listen to the Lord. Look straight ahead. Never drop your head when you're talking to somebody. Look them straight in the eye. They'll know what's on your heart. People will feel that. They'll feel that, man. I know they will. I know they will. Anyway, I don't know. And now, it tears me on that because we don't have that what's ours.

DS:

Yeah, well and part of what happened was you know, you're talking earlier about how we got numbers right now, you know, in the polls, but, you know, prior to the election, Hilary had all the numbers in the world too.

TJP:

What happened is Russia got involved? Something happened with that.

DS:

Yeah.

TJP:

That's going to come out. I believe it's going to come out.

DS:

Yeah, and so, you know—what do you think happened that caused that? Because I mean, that was beyond upsetting.

TJP:

I believe the gain was done during electoral college. So you elect it as president by the electoral votes, unless something happened with that. Hilary, beat him bad on the popular vote. But she lost on electoral votes. It's something that Russia did that changed and lowered the electoral college. I don't know what it was. Somebody went to sleep at the switch. And you know, I'm thinking that's going to come out some kind of way. I believe it is. I believe it is. Anyway, it makes you cry, man. Inside, it hurts. Because too many folks die. Black, whites, and browns. To make it—you see, I came to Lubbock, not to live in Lubbock. I came here in 1958 to pick up a car. You see, I graduated from a college that was called Bishop College in Marshall, Texas. Founded by black slaves. They gave me a hundred dollars a year to go to college there. It was nine dollars and sixty-five cents a month, to cleaned toilets and commodes so I went to college and had no money. I'm thinking that my aunt, who had a private school in Lubbock, called Maryn Maxey [?] [0:25:11]. "Come on. I'll get you a job. We'll get you a car." I came here with the intent to pick up the car then go where Dr. King was, in Atlanta. Somewhere along the way, I got stopped by the little bold lack sister in town named Bobby Jean Bailey. You following? And we stay married fifty-two and a half years until she passed, but I wasn't coming to live in Lubbock, man. And that's what happened. That's why I'm here right today because of that lady. Yeah. And I think about that sometimes. So sometimes, you think you're headed in the right direction. You might subconsciously be, but you don't know it until the ballgame is about to be over. I'm so glad that God let me stay here, you know? I didn't like what I saw when I came here. Everybody on the street was going to jail. Picking cotton and everything. But I'm glad I came here and was able to witness all of that. I'd land on a bus about ten o'clock at night. The TNM&O. I called my aunt and she cussed me out. I had no money to ride a cab. That's what I'm talking about. All those things were stopping me. Making me mad. But I couldn't leave because I had no money. What was I doing? And then I met that little black sister, and here I am in 2018. She's been dead seven years. I think about that, man. I was going to Atlanta. I was on my way. I thought of this. If you got in the car, how are you going to make it to Atlanta? Dry and then wash

dishes during the day time and sleep in my car. We couldn't stay nowhere back in 1958. In the south, that's what I was going to do. Only by the grace of God, I'm still here. Anyway, and I think a man by the name of Barack Obama got us Chicago. The things he travelled through, but he kept on keeping on. I guess the greatest lesson from the Obama election was don't never give up because you don't know what's there for you. A preacher told me something a long time ago. He called me Pat. He said, "Pat, you know what? You can't see around the corner, but God can." You follow me? Said, "God always sees our path, but you got to stay with it. You can't quit. You can't give up. You got to keep on keeping on." So I think that's the greatest thing that Obama left for us. Regardless of the obstacles in your path, you still can make it happen if you don't quit. I think that's the greatest thing he left for us. But yet, we got folks who look like me, who don't believe it'll happen. He's an example it did happen. The proof of the pudding is to taste it. You don't know what's there until you go after it. Am I making sense to you?

DS:

Um-hm.

TJP:

I think it's about the greatest thing he left, I believe that. I think that's going to come out in history. He didn't quit. Because he was president, he was catching hell. Because he's president, he's going to get it all. He was catching it. They were giving him a hard time, but he kept on keeping on. So I think if I had to look at the things that helped me was, you know, all these years before he was president and he came along and really served as a catalyst that tell them, "We don't quit. Don't quit." And then, share what you learn with some younger folks because if you dead, nobody's useless. We all dead. What I'm saying is share it with it and then help them. don't just put them down. We go to jail not to put folk down, but to reach and grab and pull them up. Sometimes, we got to pull on some people up because you'll never know, my brother, who'll bring you a cup of water.

Woman:

Excuse me. Mr. Patterson, she needs to leave so she needs to get her stuff. That's all right. She just needs to get her stuff real quick. I'm sorry.

TJP:

Okay. No problem, no problem. You're going to leave me today?

Girl:

Yeah, I think. I can come tomorrow.

TJP:

Okay.

Girl:

But I just need my water.

TJP:

But you got to get your stuff now. [Pause in recording]

DS:

[Door slams] Okay. It's running again.

TJP:

Is it running? So I guess that's the greatest thing Obama left for me. Don't give up. Like my little four-month-old great grandbaby, that's why I wanting to keep talking to him. He, he doesn't even know I'm living. You know? Not now. But he might hear something. He might hear something. I don't know. I hope he does because he has an opportunity to do something, and I think about him. I think about him now. I think about him. That's my great grand boy. That's the baby. I got ____ [0:30:20]. But I got two—four great grandkids, and he's the baby. I think about that now. I think about that. I'm going to show you—I got a picture of him here they sent me the other day. I got it the other day. I was just thinking—I just got it the other day. Where is it at here? I show it today, it's right there, see her. Four months. Both my great grandkids. I think about that. That's why I live, brother. That's what makes me want to live. Right there.

DS:

He looks ready for the 4th of July, doesn't he?

TJP:

Right. He's got his stuff on him. I think about that. I just think about that. That's why I'm here. That's what gives me the will to keep living day by day. I don't know what's around the corner, but I'm going to be here for a little while. That's what it's all about. That's what it's all about, man. After a while, they say, "T.J.'s passed on.", "T.J. who?", "That old loud talking black brother. I can't think of his name right now, but he used to talk loud all the time." That's what I think about when them kids hear that one day. One day, hopefully, they do all right. Hope so. That's all I can hope for. Right, right.

DS:

Now, we're talking about the things that are going on right now. But you know, talk about how life has changed, you know, for minorities in general since Trump has been in office?

TJP:

Well he's put us down. He really has. Really, he said, as a catalyst, makes me want to get up and do something on what he thinks about the race relationship thing is changing. He's done it. He's

not helping that. I don't think he is. He wants to be a dictator. Come on. That's what he wants to become and this is a democracy. We had to be able to get above that noise and make sure that people like him—I don't want to give all the credit, you know? But I can't. I don't like his attitude. If he was in this room, I would tell him that. If he was along my way and I was coming out, I would tell him that and apprise him on that, but he's not where—he's not in my reach. If I can put it like that because he's done bad. He's hurt. He's hurting white folk, black folk, and brown folk with his attitude about things. He wants to be a dictator and he's a liar and a dictator. So almighty God, he never made a mistake, but that surely has woke us up on a lot of stuff. I'll tell you. You can't believe him, man. And you got a crook up there with him with the EPA director, the things he's doing. I don't know, but I hope that Muller—what's the name? What's the lawyer? Attorney that's dealing with the investigation of Russia.

DS:
Muller.

TJP:

Muller. I like it. I like—he's a very strong gentleman. He's very strong. No, I don't know him, but he's got some things going. I hope he completes it. I hope he completes it. Now, Americans are getting sick and tired of all that stuff we hear the brothers doing. The long list of things he's doing. People don't like what he's doing. I don't think they do. It's going to come out one day. Like I said, I might not be around, but it's going to come out and I think he's the pitfall in life. We have to go through it, but the main thing—keep our focus on what we think is fair and equitable for all of God's children because it's not going right, right now. It's a little dark right now and we got Canada mad at us and Mexico mad at us. The way he's treating people. That's not fair. Excuse me. That's not fair. That's not equitable. Right will win. Wrong won't win. It'll kill. I don't care how good you are. How good you think you are. If it's wrong, it will not win. The right wins. I believe that. I will always believe that. Like I said, I don't know what's around the corner, but Barack Obama proved if you stand vertical in the saddle and don't quit, there's some good things around the corner for us. I believe that. I think he reinforced that in my life. Okay. Because when you're young, you want to see it happen overnight. It's not like that. It's going to take something called t-i-m-e. Okay? And a lot of folk who start out before I did, passed and gone on. Said the same thing. Same thing. So I'm just going to wait and see what's around the corner and keep treating you right and other folks right. That's all I can do, man. That's all I can do. That's all I can do. If I can keep doing that and God give me the visual logic to keep believing and I know some things will happen. No matter how many legis—how much legislation they pass in Washington D.C., unless we take advantage of it locally, it will be worth a hill of beans. I don't care what they pass or what they do, locally, you got to do some things. You see? Because some of the folk locally don't want you nothing happen, but you got to believe and do, man. You got to stand vertically and you got to stand by yourself sometimes, you know? You can't change it by yourself, but you got to keep on standing. If you stand long enough and

breathe right, some good things will happen. That's what Obama did for me. I know it. I was thinking it before I knew Obama, but to see him really helped me along the way and I thank God for that. I really do. I don't know what's around the corner, brother. I don't know if I'll make it home tonight, but if I do, I thank God for coming this far. I don't know how much farther I got to go, but I thank Him for letting me come this far. So like I said I think about that. That's how I feel about that.

DS:

Now, you mentioned the Muller investigation towards trying to impeach Trump. What kind—even though the basic circumstances are different, what kind of parallels do you draw between the Trump investigations and what Nixon was going under?

TJP:

Well Nixon was not as bold as Trump is so a lot of things that Nixon was doing, the Watergate deal you're talking about was just as bad, but the Depression kept it down. But now, what happened—what happened today, it's out in the open because of social media. We didn't have all those obstacles in the past. We didn't have all those opportunities in the past. God got a way of getting what he want out. That's what I think the difference is. People were talking more one on one to themselves. Now, social media brings everything out. Right or wrong, it comes out. You can—I think they were talking about Trump will have a war in Venezuela. He said something about that last night. About they're having a war in Venezuela. Why you want to do that? Let's help them folk clean their own mess up. Huh? Let's not reach in people's backyard. Encourage them to do something, you know? I heard it last night. I said, "Jesus Christ. Why does he want to do that?" You know? We got to take care of some American problems first. Don't we? Huh?

DS:

Yeah.

TJP:

But he's talking about wanting to start something down there in North Korea. With that Un? Was the name Un? He fixing to make it any of that-- [?] [38:48] Nuclearizing their weapons over there. We can take North Korea in thirty minutes if we really want to take it, but we got all them troops over there too. Twenty-five thousand troops from American troops over in that area so—in South Korea—so I don't know, man. It's crazy. It is crazy. We just got to be patient though. Got to hold on. Keep on keeping on. Can't quit. Got to keep holding on. It gets frustrating sometimes. I don't have the problems that some have. I thank God for letting me be here one more day. That's all I can say. Thank Him for one more—one more time. He got me here. I don't know about tomorrow, but right now, he got me here for a reason. You follow me? You know, one day I took my driving license and I want to drive and I saw the keys in the kitchen and I

drove to church. Got there. What you doing driving? I'm talking out loud. I got back home and said, "Thank God I hit nobody." You know what I'm talking out loud They had taken my license. I live three blocks from the church, but I could just drive there. That was just God looking after me. See, God looks after old folks and fools. He looked after me that morning, I know he did. They took my license. I had no reason driving. I go against the grain. I can't win like that. Could I? Couldn't win. Not a quarter of this man's law. So and sometimes, my brother, we get impatient, but it doesn't happen like that. It doesn't happen like that. We have to keep on keeping on and don't quit. Don't quit. I'm thankful you come by and let me say a few words. I appreciate that. You just don't know. I just appreciate it very much.

DS:

You know, you've always been a good influence on people.

TJP:

Thank you. Thank you.

DS:

And one of those people you influenced was your daughter. What does it mean to you that your daughter, Sheila, followed you into politics in your old office?

TJP:

I didn't look for that. She surprised me on that one. She's well developed. She studies. She does her homework and I watch her. She does her homework and she's busy every day. I'm going to tell you like your mamma told me, "Don't go up there. Just take it easy." She didn't like it at first. Now, she is seeing what you can accomplish if you do it right. Oh yeah. We have some good discussions. I don't get in her business. But I said, "Make sure you are right. You're heading in the right direction. Because you can't do it by yourself." So she'll call me and come by when she want to ask something and I thank her for that. She's more like her mom, though. I think she's more like her mom. She's better organized than I was, okay? But she got all this social media stuff. She takes pictures, puts them on the internet when she wants something done. She does all that. Oh, you'd be surprised. Lord, have mercy. I said, "All I had was an old telephone and made it work." I'm serious. But they got the—I didn't have the equipment she has. I didn't have the accessibility of things that she has. Man, I think about that. I know yesterday, she went in the parade because somebody dropped the ball on something. She said, "I'm not going to go wreck their mess. We're going to talk about it next week." Her car and—What's the one—what was her name?

DS:

Chadis? Juan Chadis?

TJP:

Yeah, Juan. They didn't ride in the car. They couldn't find their cars or something. Something happened yesterday because she wasn't—and they called her name on TV. She told what happened. There was a mix-up on the cars or something that she would just go—so just keep hanging in there. If you believe in something, stay with it. Make sure you believe in it. Before you do anything, believe in what you're doing, please. Yeah. So she's having fun. I think she is. I think she's having fun. She likes it and she didn't like it at first. All the media stuff. I said, "It's a part of it and you owe that to those folks who elected you to be their representative on different projects." So she likes—she went to Japan, you know? Representing the city of Lubbock. She's had some good times. She's been blessed. I look at her and laugh. I say, "Keep on going, girl. You'll be alright. Can't do it overnight." She likes it though. [Coughs] She's not afraid to share what she believes. But she's not going to speak if she got the knowledge she needs. I'm glad she got that. She not afraid to stand there, now. She's not afraid to question or to bring something to the table. I'm glad she got that. She'll do that. I'm kind of proud of her. I don't tell her that much. I look at her.

DS:

Yeah. I still—I need to get her to sit down for an interview because she's been so busy, you know?

TJP:

Go tell her.

DS:

I do. Every time I see her, I tell her.

TJP:

I'll tell her you want to talk to her. I'll get you up there. I'll get you up there. I sure will. I'll get you up there. I'm going to do it right now. Get her on the phone right now.

DS:

Well let me turn this down. [Pause in recording]

TJP:

She'll let you talk to her, yeah.

DS:

Oh yeah. She's a good egg. Every time I talk to her it's like at a Democratic function or something. I think you're still going on here.

TJP:

Oh yeah. Thank you.

DS:

There you go and it's always you know, something where we're both busy so we can't really talk.

TJP:

She'll talk to you.

DS:

Yeah. She will. You know, and I was letting her get her feet wet too because you don't know about the job until you've done it for a while.

TJP:

That's right, brother.

DS:

First couple of months, you really don't know what it's about yet.

TJP:

You don't know where you are.

DS:

No.

TJP:

You don't know where you are.

DS:

Especially in your place where you were creating the job.

TJP:

See, I didn't know what I was doing.

DS:

Because there had never been the—I mean, single member district was a new thing.

TJP:

That's correct.

DS:

Because it was all that large before that.

TJP:

That's right. That's right. I just had to keep things under control. They controlled us then and you can see the difference right now because of that. I don't know what's happened, but we tried. We were controlled. You follow? In other words, we wanted some of the things they had, but they kept it from us. You know, we couldn't touch it. It was off limits for us, so to speak, you know? But through it all, we come this far. Just think, we come a mighty long way and these—let me tell you something. In the black community, not many young blacks know their history. They don't know what it was. I had to tell a time when you get down to five o'clock, you couldn't walk down Broadway. They put you in jail or in the flats areas around Avenue B. What was it? That little café. Abel's Tea Room [?]. They park—what's it called? These buggies. What do you call these deals? Where they put prisoners in to keep them all—

DS:

The paddy wagon?

TJP:

The paddy wagon on the railroad track. He walked down 18th Street. Didn't have a job, but pushing that paddy wagon until five/six o'clock at night. Peed on himself hauled hauling yourself in that damn paddy wagon. That's what they did in Lubbock. I was here when they did that. That's the way it was. It was tough, man. It was tough. It was tough. It was tough. They pushed between Abel's Tea Room in a paddy wagon until they fill the paddy wagon. They take it down to jail. They take it back down there. If you don't have no job, you had to have proof that you had a bona fide job. That's the way it was, man. But like the young blacks don't know where they come from, man. They have no idea how it was, man.

DS:

Yeah. Because I mean—because back then, they had vagrancy laws, which were—

TJP:

That's right, man. That's right.

DS:

Which were, you know, totally arbitrary.

TJP:

That's right. That's how they controlled us. That's how we were controlled. That's how they whooped our behinds in those days, man. They did a good job. They did a hell of a good job.

Yeah. Did a good job. They had us. They had us. They had us. We can win. Yeah. But in those days, because of fear from the man, we were closer then, than we are now. Just because you live on 103st. don't mean you got freedom. You know what I'm talking about? So I don't know what the answer is, but let's keep on keeping on. Cannot quit. Can't stop. Got to keep on going.

DS:

Yeah. Do you know the comedian, Chris Rock?

TJP:

Who?

DS:

Comedian Chris Rock?

TJP:

Yeah, right.

DS:

Well Chris Rock said something for people that don't understand it. He goes like, you know, "I'm a wealthy, well-known black man, but no white man wants my—wants to switch places with me."

TJP:

That's right. That's true. Because you can't mix the crowd. That's right. Your right. Yoru right.

DS:

That's what he said. You know?

TJP:

That's right. That's right. He's right. They don't want to be us, but we have built this country, man.

DS:

Yeah. And there's—you know, you were talking about the rough, beyond rough times, back in the sixties, seventies, that were faced and where we're at now. You also talked about the opportunities that in East Lubbock, if you just grasp them. What are some of the things that you see here that people can build upon?

TJP:

Businesses within your own area because some of the same thing, we spent our money in other

areas. We still use those products in the area we live. Desperately I have believability what we can do and make it work because it can work. It can work if we give it a chance to work. It will work. Not can. It will work. It will work.

DS:

You know, and it just takes the mindset, I guess because I drove by a building today that some gentlemen a few months ago opened up the first gym on this side of town.

TJP:

_____ [0:50:00].

DS:

Yeah, it's just like—you know?

TJP:

Yeah, it's nice. You been inside of it?

DS:

No. I've never been inside of it.

TJP:

We should go inside on the way back. It's right out here. Just go inside and look.

DS:

Just like, you know, it's one of those things that was never over here. If you were going to the gym, you had to go to school or go across town, like you said.

TJP:

That's right. We got the same opportunities, man. We got to quit complaining about what the hell we don't have and use what we got. It'll work. But you got to believe that it will work. Quit saying what won't work and start saying what we can do. I believe that. I really believe that. Quit. Stop saying that we can't do it and we can do it. Little threads of cotton make mighty big ropes woven together in the right perspective. Things will happen. I'm a believer of that. I believe that. God knows I do. What's around the corner for me? I don't know, but I'm going to keep on talking until God takes me home. That's all I can say. And that little four and a half—little old four month great grand boy, I'll know him one day. I am looking forward to that. I hope he talk to me. Well he got to open his mouth and talk loud. Oh, man. You've helped my day, man. Thank you.

DS:

Well I'm glad you let me come visit you today.

TJP:

You helped my day, man. Thank you.

DS:

You've always help my day.

TJP:

Thank you. Thank you, sir. You helped my day. Thank you. I don't know about tomorrow, but thank you right now. Thank you. It is going to be all right. It's going to be all right. Yeah. I won't be around, but it's going to be al right.

DS:

It's going to be alright if the good people get involved.

TJP:

Are you being serious? It's not that difficult. Jesus Christ, man.

DS:

You know? You know? But they got to get involved.

TJP:

It's not that hard.

DS:

I think that's our biggest challenge right now.

TJP:

Yeah. They don't want to give nobody no credit? So what? Someway, they got to do it. Anyway.

DS:

Alright. Well I guess we can stop there because Sheila's on her way anyway.

TJP:

Okay. Yeah, she's going to come. We got to go to something later.

End of Recording