

**Oral History Interview of  
Amy and Scott Faris**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson  
February 18, 2018  
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:  
*Creative Process Interviews***

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## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Scott and Amy Faris as they discuss their pursuit and love of music. In this interview, Scott and Amy recount how they met, some of the events that they played music for, and their creative process.

**Length of Interview:** 01:24:28

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Background information	07	00:02:32
How Scott and Amy met	17	00:10:23
Going to Austin to give a presentation to TCADA	31	00:20:42
What they did to reach children	41	00:29:31
Where they learned to make their musical arrangements	56	00:40:57
What it was like when they first started working together	64	00:49:31
How Scott and Amy prepare for the creative process	78	01:03:21
Metropolis; plans for next time	88	01:13:48

### Keywords

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**Scott Faris (SF):**

—Because they would squint.

**Andy Wilkinson (AW):**

Yeah.

SF:

And I'd be like, oh here it comes. And he'd go, "Mmm. Um. Loo-dy?" And I learned early on that I could either be kind and nice about the way I corrected the teacher or I could be a little snot and be kind of sarcastic.

AW:

And then it would be difficult the whole rest of your—

SF:

Teacher would hate me, the kids would like me.

AW:

Oh yeah, so you had your choice.

**Amy Faris (AF):**

All right.

SF:

So I would say, "It's Ludd-y, and I go by Scott for obvious reasons." [Laughter] And so now I think it's a great name, but it's too late.

AW:

Yeah, no I—so we're—in case you haven't figured this out, oh ye who are listening to this in years sence, Andy Wilkinson is here talking to Luddy?

SF:

Yes. [laughter]

AW:

Scott Faris. F-a-r-i-s. And his beautiful wife Amy. What is—do you have a middle name that you prefer or?

AF:

I use my maiden name, which is Goode. G-o-o-d-e.

SF:

It's Amy Lynn Goode.

AF:

Right. Amy Lynn Goode-Faris.

AW:

L-y-n-n?

AF:

L-y-n—

AW:

Okay.

AF:

--n. Yes, two Ns. [laughter] I was thinking of Gary.

AW:

G-double o-d—

AF:

d-e.

AW:

And "Goo-d" not—I've heard people say, "Goodie".

AF:

No. We say "Goo-d." Rhymes with "food." [laughter]

SF:

Like Luddy rhymes with Muddy.

AF:

Yeah.

AW:

I like it. And we are—it's the sixteenth of February in the afternoon. We are in their wonderful studio—Amusement Park Studios—making a play off the misspelling of last name Faris. And we're going to be—this is the first of what I hope will be several oral history interviews that

we'll do. We're going to focus today—because we all have schedules today that are a little difficult—

SF:

We do.

AW:

--but we're going to focus on creative process, both individually but what is terribly interesting to me is the fact that you're doing this as a couple. Most couples have trouble mowing the lawn together. [Laughter] Much less doing something in the creative process world. So that's going to be interesting. But I do need to get a little basic biographical information right now so that we have a sort of anchor to tie this to. So Amy? What's your date of birth?

AF:

4/21/70.

AW:

Gosh, what a child. I'm so impressed. And where were you born?

AF:

Mineral Wells, Texas.

AW:

Mineral Wells. And Scott?

SF:

My birthday is 8/31/67.

AW:

Okay.

SF:

And I was born in Aurora, Colorado. Let's see Fittsimmons General Army Hospital.

AF:

I was in an Army hospital, too.

AW:

Yeah. So were each of your parents in the military?



AF:

My dad was in the Army at the time.

AW:

Okay. And I know that you're—because we've talked about that.

SF:

Yeah, my dad was in the Air Force for his primary career. He was a lieutenant colonel when he retired.

AW:

Yeah, okay. And you grew up where? Each of you?

AF:

Here.

AW:

In Lubbock?

AF:

We moved to Lubbock when I was about six months old. So yeah, I've been here my whole life.

AW:

Okay. [Writing] And Scott?

SF:

Uh.

AW:

Because you had a little more circuitry.

SF:

Yeah. [Laughter] Had quite a long path. Lived in Colorado Springs. Lived in Enid, Oklahoma. Lived in Wichita Falls. Lived in Shreveport, Louisiana. Lived in Montgomery, Alabama.

AF:

Merced.



SF:

Merced, California. Spent a couple years on Guam when my dad was remote and then went back to Colorado Springs, and then moved here half way through my Junior year of high school.

AW:

Of high school? Okay.

SF:

So—[laughter]

AF:

That's a lot.

SF:

Slightly different path than Amy.

AF:

A little bit, yeah.

SF:

It always amazes me, because she'll go to the mall and run into her kindergarten teacher and they'll recognize each other.

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

And I don't even know where I went to kindergarten. [Laughter] You know what I mean? I wouldn't—I don't remember any of that.

AW:

So school. What schools did you go to?

AF:

Let's see. I went to Stubbs Elementary; Stewart Elementary; I was bussed to Guadalupe and Posey; and then I went to Hutch for junior; and Lubbock High School.

AW:

Okay. And when you got to Lubbock, where did you lie?

AF:

I went to Cooper High School, south of 10.

AW:

Oh. Cooper. Okay. And you each graduated from Lubbock High and from Cooper?

SF:

Yup.

AF:

Um-hm. Yes.

AW:

And as we were walking in one of you—it may have been Scott—mentioned that you were, Amy, were a Tech grad also.

SF:

Um-hm. Yes.

AW:

So what did you study at Texas Tech?

AF:

Music composition.

AW:

Pretty cool.

AF:

Yeah.

AW:

Did you—so graduate with a BA in music?

AF:

Yes.

AW:

And did you do any graduate work?

AF:  
I didn't.

AW:  
Okay. And Scott?

SF:  
I have a degree in sculpture from Tech.

AW:  
From Tech?

SF:  
Yeah.

AW:  
Yeah, cool.

SF:  
I was in the art department, but I studied a tremendous amount of music. We met in the music building.

AW:  
That was going to be my next question.

SF:  
Yeah. But I had enough music credits to do a music minor, but the department at that time was a little bit closed-minded, and they didn't see how visual art and music related, so they would not allow me to do that. So I went to my art professors and said, "Well I want to do this. I want to create something called sound sculpture." And they said, "That sounds absolutely valid." And so they allowed me to use music credits as sculpture credits, because they saw it as one art form. Music building at that time did not. Now it's much more progressive now.

AF:  
We were snobby over there.

AW:  
Do you really think it's that much more—I teach in the music school, so I'm not so sure.  
[Laughs]

SF:

I think there is a younger echelon that gets it now. [Laughs]

AW:

Yeah, I think that's right too. So what year did you graduate?

AF:

From Tech? '93.

AW:

Ninety-three.

SF:

Ninety.

AW:

Ninety. So '90, '93. Okay. Was Dr. Vann one of your professors?

AF:

Yeah. Dr. Vann and Steve.

AW:

And Steve?

AF:

Paxton.

AW:

Paxton. Oh that's great.

AF:

Yeah, it was great.

AW:

I hear from him every now and again. You know after he went up to Santa Fe and then that school folded up, now I don't know what he's—

SF:

He's still in Santa Fe.

AW:

Yeah, he's still in Santa Fe, I think.

SF:

I think he may have retired last year.

AF:

I think he's doing a website with a bunch of transcriptions and things like that.

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

Yeah.

AF:

Which is awesome.

AW:

He and I worked together on a project called *Stories from a Storm Cellar*.

AF:

Awesome.

AW:

At the old Lubbock Arts Center when it was on Avenue P.

SF:

We were—

AF:

Maybe.

SF:

Was the band up on top of a high—the roof in there? Or inside the building? It was over off of Avenue P?

AW:

Yeah, no.

SF:

What am I thinking of?

AW:

What Steve did—Steve Teeters and I—he did sculpture and I did music for our piece. Jim Johnson did a piece. There were a lot of people that did one. Steve Paxton did a piece where he had—it was—you know, it was typical Steve Paxton.

SF:

Yeah, yeah.

AW:

Electronic music.

AF:

Yeah.

AW:

And it was my first meeting with him, which was really—it was really instructive. It was really pleasant to get to know him.

SF:

Yeah. By the way, if that gets too cold, let me know. My air conditioner is a deep freeze.

AF:

It is.

AW:

That will suit me just fine.

AF:

Okay.

SF:

I think we saw that.

AF:

We may have been there.

SF:

I think we were there. I think Jim Johnson's piece was like a band, and it was up high somehow in the room.

AW:

Yeah, the room wasn't all that big. I don't know how he did it, but there were such—it was such a hit. And not because of me. I just happened to be—

SF:

Yeah. Yeah.

AW:

But it was such a hit that they had to do it an extra weekend.

AF:

Cool.

SF:

Fantastic.

AW:

We were just going to have a one-weekend thing, but it was really a terrific—it was such a nice example of something that was a little more common then than now in terms of—not musicians and artists—visual artists—working together, because that happens.

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

Sure.

AW:

But people working together on the same project.

SF:

Yes. Absolutely.

AW:

And we were all paired up that way.



AF:

I love that.

SF:

Which is so cool.

AW:

Yeah, which was very cool. But Steve was quite a trip.

AF:

[laughter] Meanwhile, to get to know him. In fact, I couldn't stand him my first semester.

AW:

Oh really?

AF:

I wrote a terrible review of him.

AW:

Really?

AF:

I did! I just—because he was so hard to dig information out of. And he and I were both very introverted, and it was just like pulling teeth. So he took me to coffee the first of the next semester and said, “What can we do differently? What are you into? What are you listening to?” And I loved him after that. It was fabulous.

AW:

Yeah. Well, that's very interesting, because I knew him for a long time and never thought I knew him. [Laughs]

AF:

Right? I don't know that anyone ever fully does.

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

Yeah.

AW:

Yeah, but I liked him a lot and the thing that—one of the things that I liked best about him was he was one of those people, which is very rare in academia. Which is when you propose something, the first words out of Steve's mouth were, "Sure." [Laughter]

AF:

Right. That's right.

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

"We can do that." And whereas most people, "No, no, no. That will be five years."

SF:

"Not yet."

AF:

That's true.

AW:

Yeah, he was quite—I'm sure still is. So you met in the school of music. How did that come down?

SF:

I was an upperclassman, and I was studying music composition with Steve.

AW:

Vann? Oh, with Steve.

SF:

With Steve.

AF:

And I was too.

SF:

And Amy was as well. We both had private lessons with Steve. And Amy studying real stuff. Me being just stupid and wanting to play with 8 Track tape machine.

AF:

There was real stuff.

SF:

Well, it was a little more real than what I was doing, probably. But I accidentally one day showed up for class early. [Laughs]

AW:

Oh yeah. You didn't want to get in the habit of doing that.

SF:

No, not me. I don't know how that happened. And all I remember was opening the door, because I just didn't know he had a student before me. And I walked in and there were these beautiful green eyes sitting beside my piano teacher—or behind the piano with my teacher. And I was kind of dumbfounded. So I was like, "Oh, I'm sorry." And I went out. And I showed up early for class every single time. [Laughter]

AF:

But he'd never say anything!

SF:

I just smiled because I was too nervous. And then finally we had to do a performance at the semester. All of the upperclassman had to play and I performed. At the end—

AF:

It was our final. And we watched *Yellow Submarine*.

AW:

Oh, cool. So you had like a—what now the trendy term is the capstone?

SF:

It was a capstone experience, yes. Absolutely. So I went in after and everybody left. And I went in to—one of my pieces, I played guitar with tape and I went in to rewind it and was like mulling it over in my brain. I was like, "You know what? It's Christmas. I'm never going to see this girl ever again. I should chase her down." So I just dropped everything and I ran down the hall.

AF:

I'd stopped at a bench to put my coat on, because there was a blizzard outside. So I was getting ready to leave.

SF:

Right at the top of the staircase.

AW:

This is like a Hallmark movie.

SF:

I know. It's pretty disgusting, isn't it? [Laughter]

AF:

It really did—it's still The Bench, and we visit that.

SF:

We still visit the bench periodically.

AF:

When we go to the music building we go up and look at the spot.

AW:

Oh cool.

SF:

Yeah yeah. So that's where we met.

AW:

Okay, so you didn't run off when he said, "I'm chasing you down, but I'm not a stalker." Is that about what you were thinking?

AF:

No, I thought he was so cute. I was just hoping he'd say something.

AW:

Very cool.

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

Yeah, so I asked her her name and then said, "Now that I have your name, can I have your phone number?"

AF:  
Yeah.

SF:  
And the rest is history.

AF:  
Yeah.

AW:  
So how long did you see each other before you wound up getting married?

AF:  
A year and eight months.

AW:  
Because I was going to say, y'all have been married a long—

SF:  
A long time.

AF:  
Very long time. Yeah, we married in '90.

AW:  
For such young kids. You married in when?

AF:  
Ninety.

AW:  
Ninety.

AF:  
So I was twenty.

SF:  
I was twenty-three.

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AW:

Yeah, well I'd been twenty a month and my wife was still nineteen when we married so I know the feeling.

AF:

My daughter got married earlier than that. She was what? Nineteen.

SF:

Nineteen.

AW:

Well that—Mary Ann, my wife, was nineteen. In those days she didn't need her mother's permission, but I did because I wasn't twenty one. [laughter]

SF:

Wow!

AW:

Yeah.

SF:

That's funny.

AW:

Yeah, back in the old days. Married—what day were you married?

AF:

August eleventh.

SF:

Eleventh. August eleventh.

AW:

August seventeenth.

SF:

Oh great! That's good. Her grandparents were August twelfth. Or was it tenth?

AF:

Tenth, tenth.

AW:

Yeah, cool. Very cool. So did you—when I first met you, I think you were both at South Plains.

SF:

Teaching out there.

AW:

And you had the studio over in that giant building that was weird? Over there by the Spur or—it was this huge building. It was supposed to be an entertainment nightclub center? Do you remember what I'm talking about?

SF:

I don't. No. I had a studio in a church for a while. Where did we? We've had something over there?

AF:

Well we did have warehouses in Rapunzel.

SF:

We had rehearsal facilities over in that area.

AF:

That was early. That was a long time ago.

SF:

Yeah, that was a long time ago. I don't know.

AW:

Well, do you even know the building I'm talking about? The idea was there would be—it was kind of fashionable at the time—there would be ten different night clubs—a country nightclub.

AF:

Oh, Graham?

AW:

Yeah!

SF:

Oh yeah, maybe it was Graham's.



AF:

Graham Central Station?

SF:

I wasn't really a part of that. We just played over there.

AW:

Maybe that's what I—I met you over there.

SF:

That's right! You came out and saw us play there.

AW:

That was it. Yeah, okay okay.

SF:

When we were in—that was probably Meltdown Morning, toward the end.

AW:

Yes, that was the name.

AF:

Oh, okay. Yeah.

SF:

Because you did the art for Texas Highways. That's what it was.

AW:

Yeah. Yeah.

SF:

That's it.

AW:

All right.

SF:

That's right.

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AW:

Thank you.

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

I knew, eventually—

SF:

--we'll make connections. [Laughter]

AF:

Right.

AW:

So when you met in the school music and with the same eccentric and quite interesting professor as sort of the nexus there—

SF:

Yes, he was.

AW:

—was other than the romance which brought you together, how quickly did you become musical partners as well as life partners?

AF:

We—so we met in December.

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

And we played a gig at my mom's school where she was an aid, Ballinger. The next month.

SF:

Yeah. Literally it was probably three weeks.

AF:

I played piano. You played guitar.

SF:

We did our first gig together.

AF:

For the kids there.

AW:

In a month.

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

Yeah. So pretty quickly.

AF:

Pretty fast.

SF:

Yeah, that was the thing that pulled both of us together. It was the love of creating music and I'd never really thought about doing that.

AW:

As a career?

SF:

No.

AW:

Oh, with someone.

SF:

No, I decided when I was eight years old that I was going to do this as a career. I knew what I was going to do.

AF:

Me too. I was eight too.

SF:

But I'd never really thought of having a life partner that did that.

AW:  
Well I—

SF:  
Because I don't think that just enters your brain, really. You know what I mean?

AF:  
No.

AW:  
Yeah. No, in fact, what enters my brain is how jealous I am of the thrill of the creative process that I'm not quite sure I want to share it with anybody, you know?

SF:  
Sure.

AF:  
I do.

AW:  
Does that make sense?

SF:  
Totally.

AF:  
No, it does. I write really well alone like that.

SF:  
So do I.

AF:  
You know what I mean.

AW:  
Yeah. So when did you—other than—and performing music together is a different critter than—

SF:  
Than writing.

AW:

Than writing or composing music together. When did you—how long did it take you to get to the stage or step?

SF:

Pretty quickly.

AF:

It was really quick. We played the Arts Festival when we were dating. I remember that.

SF:

Yeah. Did original work for that.

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

We just both launched in.

AF:

And then Rapunzel.

SF:

Yeah, we were doing original music in that as well.

AW:

Now Rapunzel. Talk a little bit about that. I know, because it's such an interesting thing. But let's talk a little bit to get that on tape, because we'll come back to that later. What was Rapunzel?

SF:

Rapunzel was actually a drug prevention program that we did in the public schools. It was actually a rock band that toured public schools.

AW:

Yeah. Why did you choose—

SF:

To do that? [Laughs]

AW:

Drug prevention? No, I understand, because in that era—I think at that same time I was touring for TCA in schools. So there was money available for that sort of thing.

AF:

Yes.

SF:

There was.

AF:

There was.

AW:

But why drug prevention? Why did you pick that?

AF:

A lady at Frenship just asked, right?

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

We had a band that was with that.

SF:

I had done—Lubbock Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse had—I don't remember if they approached me or I told them the idea or whatever—to do a television commercial. And I did a TV commercial where I played a lick and I looked at the camera and said, "If I did drugs, I couldn't do that."

AW:

Cool.

SF:

Yeah. Relatively snot-nosed arrogant little thing to say when you're a nineteen year old kid or whatever it is, you know? [laughter]

AF:

He was so cute, though.

AW:

Now this was before you were married?

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

Before I'd met him. Yeah.

SF:

Yeah, this was before we'd even met. And so I had some volunteer work for them and stuff. You know, I had gone through a period in high school where I drank and all of that good fun stuff that all of us kind of seem to do and most of us seem to do during that time period.

AW:

Now that is what high school is about, right?

SF:

That is correct. [Laughs] Absolutely. And I'd watched a good friend just kind of keep going. You know, as an adult many, many years later, I probably have a little bit different viewpoint of people. I'm a little less judgmental and little more forgiving of people's need to escape, if that makes sense. But back then I kind of watched that happen, and then there was a guy that got killed from my high school. You know, you see stuff like that and it kind of has an effect on you. I decided I wanted to try to see if I could help other people. So I did the television commercial, and then this lady from Frenship High School out of the blue goes, "Hey, I understand you have a band that does—that you could do a drug prevention thing." And I said, "No, I don't."

AF:

So we did.

SF:

"But I'll have one by tomorrow."

AF:

So we put one together.

SF:

It was our first gig.



AW:

But were married by now?

AF:

No, we were dating.

SF:

No, we were single. We were dating.

AW:

You were still dating?

SF:

We were still dating, you know. And so we did that and the thought that you could get paid for that was—

AF:

Crazy.

SF:

--not anywhere near our heads. We met a woman from Brownfield High School, because she took guitar lessons at Brandon Guitar Studio where I was teaching. She had had students have issues and all of that stuff. She asked me about and I told her about it and she offered to become our manager. She happened to know Jim Rudd, who was the head of the House Appropriations Committee at the time. She asked him about it and he said, "Yeah, there's money available for stuff like that." So here we—

AF:

Through the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, we were funded.

SF:

Actually, first one was the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

AF:

Right. TCADA.

SF:

Yeah, TCADA. We were just a bunch of snot-nosed kids. But we had something that we knew was powerful, because music is—I mean, that's a language and there's something—it touches on

an emotional level, it deeper than anything else we have, I think. I feel. So the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse asked us to come down and give a presentation.

AW:

Come down to Austin?

SF:

To Austin!

AF:

Yes.

SF:

Yeah. So here's these—here's me and Amy and our drummer who's another hippie. I mean, we're just a bunch of hippie freaks.

AW:

Who was your drummer?

AF:

Mike Hogan was his name.

SF:

Mike Hogan. Yeah. Great guy from around here. He lives down in Austin now. We basically went and found that the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse was serving all the counties except this giant hole in west Texas.

AW:

Which was us?

SF:

Which was us. We—

AF:

We were just telling them.

SF:

We literally walked into their offices and said, "You're doing a crappy job." [Laughs]

AF:

We didn't in so many words.

SF:

We didn't put it that way. That's what we said. [Laughs]

AF:

We did present our research.

SF:

Yeah, and so they funded us. [laughs]

AW:

Yeah. Well cool. So when you say "funded", what does that mean? They paid you a wage? They sent you to gigs? They paid you on a gig by gig?

AF:

We received grants. So we wrote many, many grant proposals.

AW:

So you'd write a grant?

AF:

Yes.

AW:

Oh, that's really cool.

AF:

So we had to learn a lot of skills, actually.

AW:

Oh that—what great training.

AF:

Pretty early. We started a nonprofit corporation.

SF:

Yeah, I was a—we started our nonprofit the year we were married.

AF:

That's right.

SF:

I was the president of my first nonprofit corporation at twenty-three. We started writing grants. Our first grant they gave us sixty thousand dollars to fund—

AW:

So you started writing grants as married people?

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

Yes.

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

And well that's—you survived that then you can survive anything. [Laughter] My goodness.

SF:

Honest to God. Oh my gosh. [Laughs] It's true.

AW:

So walk us—someone—through—who's listening to this, the process of how you would—because I know from my own experience that grants are pretty easy if you're getting equipment or you're getting travel or you're getting blah, blah, blah. But as soon as something sneaks in that looks like you're getting paid then it's a lot more difficult. How did you structure—how did you think about that?

SF:

Well, the first thing that we did is we identified specific regions that we wanted to serve, and we looked up the schools we wanted to serve. Then we got those schools to write letters that say, "Yes, we want this." So we proved need, because we had all the statistics from the region, okay? We proved that the funding agency wasn't doing their job in the region. [Laughs] I'm surprised they didn't kick us out.

AW:

So this is like biting the hand before it feeds you? [laughter]

SF:

Yes, we kind of did and I just can't believe it.

AF:

We just didn't know any better.

SF:

Yeah. And so what we did is we looked at it and we said, "Okay, we need this equipment. We need this kind of stuff." We set up—it wasn't just about music, either, really. I mean we had 1-800 hotlines. We had counselors available for students. I mean this was a—

AF:

For—as part of this nonprofit?

AF:

Yes. We spoke in classrooms and wrote letters to kids.

SF:

Educational materials were provided. Yeah. And we would go back and do events where we'd like maybe host a dance later on or something, and go back and hang out with the kids and all this stuff. It's a really amazing, amazing thing to be a part of. So we would structure that. They wouldn't allow us to purchase any equipment, which was—seemed like—a waste of money to us. They would only let us rent it, which was really dumb.

AF:

Yeah, because we still have the Puritan thing that you might actually get something out of that, right? [Laughter]

SF:

Right. Exactly. Yeah, like a better value for *your* dollar. [Laughs] You know, it just seems—so we'd have—

AW:

So you'd rent a PA? That makes sense. A van?

SF:

A truck to carry it.

AF:

Lights and all that.

SF:

You know, our trailer, lights.

AW:

But not your instruments?

SF:

No, we provided all that ourselves.

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

And then we actually put in for—

AF:

For salaries.

SF:

Salaries.

AW:

And that went—that worked?

SF:

We did it, yeah. And they were not exorbitant. I mean, we did that for about seven years. The first seven years that we were married. And I think between the two of us—this is two people's salaries—we were grossing 40K. So it was twenty a piece. That's not a lot of—that's not a lot of scratch for a full-time gig, you know what I mean? Even back then, that wasn't a lot of scratch. So I think they went, "These kids will do that for? They're stupid." [Laughter]

AW:

So how big of an organization did you have? Besides the two of you and your drummer, did you have a staff that answered these lines?

SF:

We actually contracted with a phone service company that provided counselors and provided individuals that would answer the line. If it was a—

AW:

They'd route it to 911?

SF:

They'd route it, or to our—

AW:

To you?

SF:

Yeah, they'll—

AF:

Wasn't it the Lubbock—

SF:

Lubbock Commission on—or, yeah—Lubbock Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse funded or they managed the hotline here and all of that. Then Glenda, our manager, was a schoolteacher. So she would develop all the educational materials that we would send out to the schools. And then newsletters went out to all the kids in the schools and all this. So I mean, it was a pretty big deal. There were four of us that were on staff. That was Glenda, me, you, and Mike.

AF:

Eventually we had other people be the corporation—be the nonprofit. Because we weren't anymore.

SF:

Yeah, we had to—if we wanted to get paid—

AF:

We had to bow out.

SF:

--we couldn't be on the board.



AF:  
Right.

SF:  
So.

AW:  
You had to divest yourself of that.

SF:  
So I became the associate director. Glenda was the executive director.

AW:  
It was a more ethical time then, wasn't it?

SF:  
It was. As opposed to our current time, yeah. It's pretty unbelievable.

AW:  
So where did the name Rapunzel come from?

AF:  
I was writing a rock opera, actually, based on the fairy tale Rapunzel. I realized that there was addiction.

SF:  
Steve Paxton mentioned it to you.

AF:  
That's true. In that story. So I was like, "Well, that would be a cool band name." So. It was kind of silly, but.

SF:  
Because the man's wife would look over into the garden and there were Rapunzel's that were growing there, which were like a radish, and she wanted them.

AF:  
Would have him go steal them.

SF:

He would steal them, and every time he stole them she had to have more, and more, and more, and more, and more.

AW:

So a fable ahead of its time?

SF:

Quite. Most are.

AW:

Quite interesting. How—today we would say amphetamines, opioids, maybe top of the list and then other drugs—what were the principle issues in terms of the vehicle of these addictions?

SF:

The abuse that was going on back then?

AF:

The biggest was alcohol.

SF:

Alcohol was the biggest.

AF:

Because we didn't view it as a danger.

SF:

Because nobody views it as a danger.

AW:

Well, that's because we watched Nick and Nora Charles and Woody—I mean, it's a social thing. You don't think about the two drugs that cost America the most in money are alcohol and tobacco.

SF:

Tobacco.

AF:

Right.

SF:

Absolutely.

AW:

So it was alcohol?

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

Definitely alcohol.

SF:

Alcohol was number one. Amphetamines were still there. Crystal meth.

AF:

Steroids.

SF:

Crystal meth was there. Steroids were huge.

AF:

All the football teams and the small towns around.

SF:

Football.

AW:

So that's very interesting. Not very many people thought—unless they were looking at taking away your MVP status or your gold medal—they don't think about steroids as being an addiction.

SF:

Yeah, and I don't know that it's a—I don't know the chemical—if there's a chemical component to that or not. But I would assume there is.

AW:

I will tell you—this is just for my elucidation on this—I have, like, an eczema or something. One of those kinds of things. So it's gotten real bad. I went to the dermatologist—a guy my age. He gives me a big shot and clears it up, but for two or three days I felt great. Not high. I just felt

rested. I felt energetic. So I came back in the week later and I said, “Man, I haven’t felt so good.” And he said, “That’s why that stuff is so dangerous.” And I went, “Oh” [laughter]

SF:

Oh, crap.

AF:

It’s true.

SF:

Dang it!

AW:

I didn’t even catch on until he mentioned it.

SF:

Makes total sense.

AW:

There is that. So when we read about these athletes—ever since then when I read about—they say, “Well, they’re just trying to get medals.” I think, no. It feels good.

AF:

Right.

SF:

Well, and when you can take a shot and all of the sudden you’re stronger and bigger than—

AW:

Ten years younger.

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

So how—let me just throw in my—here’s what I assume. You being—because you were young, and you were hippies. Actually, it was a long time after the hippies, let me just tell you.

AF:

Oh yeah.

SF:

You're right.

AW:

But you were—you didn't look like the school counselors. So that had to be help. What else did you do to reach children?

SF:

It was the music. Music.

AF:

Music, absolutely. And then they wrote letters, and some of these kids we still know.

AW:

Really?

AF:

Yes.

AW:

They wrote you letters?

AF:

They wrote us letters and we wrote every single one of them back.

AW:

Oh that's cool. Have you saved—

AF:

We'd even have letter writing parties.

AW:

Have you saved those letters?

SF:

We have a bunch of them still somewhere.

AF:

I bet we do. I imagine we do.

AW:

You know, they need to be archived while we're talking.

AF:

That is a great idea.

AW:

It really is.

SF:

We need to look and see if we can find those.

AW:

I mean, it's really important because—

AF:

I know we saved them.

AW:

That's a thing that will be really valuable. Now while we're talking here about that, there will a way that they can be archived and redacted so that—

SF:

It would need to be, for obvious reasons.

AW:

So that the name can't be connected.

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

But you really should think about that as something to document.

SF:

We need to look into that.

AF:

That would be cool.

SF:

Yeah, we need to look that up, because I bet you there's a freaking box up in that garage.

AF:

Yeah, and we don't need them. I mean.

SF:

Yeah. Like we're not going to do anything with them.

AW:

Yeah, well think about us. We'd love to do that. And imagine the value of those letters a hundred years from now.

SF:

Yeah, absolutely.

AW:

Because the problem will be the same.

SF:

Nothing will have changed.

AW:

Yeah, the drugs will be different. So that would be a really interesting thing.

SF:

That's really cool. Yeah.

AW:

It would also be—do you still—since you gave up the operation of that nonprofit, do you still have your business records from that? Let me just say, if you do that is also a thing that will be of value.

SF:

Would be of value? Okay, great.

AW:

Well, let me give you an illustration: Alan Munde.



SF:  
Yeah.

AW:  
He retired.

SF:  
Yeah.

AF:  
Yeah.

AW:  
He drove his pickup at the time—camper shell—backed up to our loading dock and unloaded an entire truckload full of spiders and silverfish. [Laughter]

SF:  
Of course.

AW:  
But also—also all of the business records of *Country Gazette*.

SF:  
Oh wow.

AF:  
How cool.

SF:  
That's a big deal.

AW:  
That is a big deal, because if you wanted to look at how to tour an acoustic ensam in the 1980s in America—

SF:  
Yeah.

AF:  
Right.

SF:

That's right.

AW:

--there was what it cost for a hotel room, what did it cost for transportation, what did you pay the band, what did you—the kinds of details—

SF:

That's fantastic. I've never thought of that.

AW:

--kinds of detail that will disappear.

AF:

Right. That's right.

AW:

So if you do have those kinds of records, you ought to think about those as part of your archive.

AF:

We'll look for that.

SF:

We need to look at that. I don't know whether we--

AF:

Glenda may—

SF:

--Will or not because Glenda—

AF:

Took over the nonprofit when we stopped to have a baby.

SF:

It ended a little bit ugly, unfortunately.

AF:

It did.

SF:

Because of that. The split with Glenda and when we determined that we needed to be done.

AF:

Right.

AW:

Okay. Well, and that was going to be my next question, was how did it come to a—change after seven years? Because surely the problem didn't change in the society.

SF:

Sure.

AF:

No.

AW:

So what moved you to do something different?

AF:

We were—it was mostly us and the drummer. We were the three main members. We had like fourteen bass players during that time.

SF:

Yeah, we just numbered them. Pretty common. No surprise there.

AF:

Went through a bunch. So it was us and Mike, and we had a meeting and said—we were both at a point in life. Mike was going to get married.

AW:

Yeah.

AF:

We were wanting to have a child. And we were like, "I think we can be done." And we were all three just like, "Yeah, I think it's time." You know? We wanted to focus on our own child and yeah.

SF:

And I'm a—I think, unfortunately, in this world it seems like people believe things can't have good endings. You know what I mean? And it was a—that part of it, with Amy and Mike and I—was a really really great ending.

AF:

Yeah, it was.

SF:

The ending with our manager wasn't as great. She was very disappointed that we weren't going to continue.

AF:

Angry.

SF:

And she was angry and frustrated by that and so unfortunately—

AW:

So did she try to replace you in that nonprofit scheme and keep going?

SF:

That's what we—we gave it to her. Gave her the name—

AW:

With the idea that she would do that.

AF:

I think she did a radio show for a while.

SF:

Yeah. We wanted it to continue. And she was good friends with Peggy Sue.

AF:

Right.

SF:

And so they did a radio show together. As a matter of fact, she was the co-author on Peggy Sue's tell-all book, okay? She was awesome. I just think—I think something like that isn't something

you can just go hire musicians to do. First off, where are you going to find musicians that aren't smoking weed, okay? [Laughter]

AW:

Or willing to give it up to do this.

SF:

That's correct. You know what I mean?

AW:

So Glenda's last name? I should know it.

SF:

Cameron.

AF:

Cameron.

SF:

Glenda Cameron. And she was really instrumental.

AW:

C-a-m-e-r-o-n?

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

Yes.

SF:

She was really instrumental in making all of that happen for us.

AF:

Absolutely.

SF:

She passed away a few years ago, unfortunately.

AF:  
Yeah.

AW:  
Well, okay. Quite interesting. So when you decide you want to have a family and you're not going to do that anymore, then the question would be, okay, not only do you have to have something else to do, but now you're going to have another little person to take care of.  
[Laughter]

AF:  
Terrifying.

AW:  
Yeah. So what?

SF:  
So how did we pay for that? [laughter]

AW:  
Well, actually, you probably discovered—like I did with mine—is that children don't cost anything to have. It's when they get to be bigger.

AF:  
Ours did.

SF:  
Oh my lord.

AF:  
We finally finished paying our birth of our child off when she was five. So.

AW:  
Well, what I mean in terms of the total bill.

AF:  
Oh yeah. Oh.

AW:  
When they get to be—cars and colleges and houses and all of—

SF:

We're in the middle of that right now.

AF:

Weddings and all that. Yeah, and college.

AW:

So what was your plan to—?

SF:

I had a great plan. [AF laughs] We had six months' worth of living saved.

AF:

You were teaching guitar.

SF:

I was teaching guitar.

AW:

Okay, at Brandon's?

SF:

Yep, at Brandon Guitar Center.

AW:

Was he still Brea, or was it Brandon?

SF:

He was Brandon.

AF:

He was Brandon.

SF:

He'd been Brandon ever since I'd met him. I started taking from him when I first moved here. And I taught for him for so many years, and he finally said, "Hey, would you"—I think in like—I moved here in '83 and I think in like '87 he asked me to teach for him. Which was killer. Great thing. But we had about six months' worth of rent saved up when we left Rapunzel. So we're making about 40K, and the desktop publishing thing had happened, you know. Macintosh



computers and everything else. I went—I got it all figured out. “I’m going to do graphic design.” Which wasn’t a stretch for me, because I was already doing all our stuff.

AW:

You had a BFA [**Bachelor of Fine Arts**].

SF:

A degree in Art. Yep, my BFA. And so I went and bought a Mac on a credit card.

AW:

Yeah, which back at that time was not all that cheap.

SF:

No, it was not cheap. It was a terrifying purchase. The first month as a graphic designer I made sixty dollars. It was a little—it was like, “Oh, no.”

AF:

Yeah, that—the first year of Rachel’s birth we made fourteen thousand dollars.

SF:

Oh, it was sixteen.

AF:

Was it sixteen?

AW:

Oh sixteen. [mock claps] Don’t make this—

SF:

Well I don’t want to short change my earning potential. [laughter] Yeah. We went from 40K, had a baby, and made sixteen. I don’t—we didn’t know where rent was coming from. But I also—for the first two years of her life—I worked out of the house.

AF:

And at Digital Base.

SF:

And I did work at Digital Base for about six months.

AF:

He did a brief stint.

SF:

At Digital Base.

AF:

Before South Plains came along.

SF:

Yeah, before SPC.

AW:

Now were you—did you, Amy—were you teaching at South Plains by this time or?

AF:

No. When he started teaching there they hired me on as a part-time instructor.

SF:

And they asked her to go full-time and she just—

AF:

Uhn-uh. Not with a toddler.

SF:

--didn't want to do it with a kiddo at home.

AW:

Right.

SF:

And we're still trying to play and we're—new projects kind of percolating.

AF:

Exactly.

SF:

And so—but yeah. I worked for Digital Base for about six months, and they offered me a full-time gig at the same time that John Hartman called me. And I've always made every career decision based on what takes me closer to the dream versus what takes me farther from the

dream, which is doing what we love. And so I looked at it and went, Okay, I can work for these guys fifty or fifty-one weeks a year for X amount of dollars, or I can make less money at SPC, but I have three months off during the summer that I can do whatever I want. Well, that's pretty much a no brainer there, if you're going to choose art over money. [laughter]

AF:

Well, and the insurance. I mean—

SF:

Yeah, that too was amazing to have.

AF:

Health insurance was a big—yeah.

AW:

Oh yeah. Yeah.

AF:

That was nice. That was our first time to—

SF:

Yeah, because we didn't have that with Rachel and Amy had to have a C-section, so we paid the balance.

AF:

Right.

AW:

Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

SF:

It took us five years to pay that off. And at an itinerate musician's wage those things are tough to do, you know?

AW:

No, I hear you. Well, quite interesting. During that time—during Rapunzel and then also during this time when you're rolling in your sixteen thousand dollar a year income. [laughter] Were you doing compositions—the two of you?

SF:

Oh yeah.

AF:

Yes.

SF:

We recorded—

AF:

Together and separate.

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

Yeah. Both of us were. You were also a church pianist, so you were also arranging a lot of offertories at church and all of that.

AF:

Yeah. True.

SF:

I was writing acoustic guitar pieces and still had dreams of being a little Eric Johnson, so I was trying to write all these high falutin electric guitar parts that were far beyond my ability to play. [laughter] And still are.

AW:

You're not a good writer if you don't write beyond your abilities. That's all there is to it.

SF:

This is true. This is true.

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

My tastes have changed. I like much simpler things nowadays.

AW:

Yeah, well Eric. One of my best friends growing up, in fact, his parents and my mother and dad were best friends in Slaton—drummed for Eric or—

SF:

Oh Steve!

AW:

Steve Metter.

SF:

Steve is an awesome guy.

AW:

We were little kids this big together.

SF:

Oh wow.

AW:

And so I used to go—when he'd come to town I'd go hang out with him and watch Eric. Because I wouldn't have gone out to see Eric on my own. It just wasn't my thing.

SF:

It's not your cup of tea, yeah. Absolutely.

AW:

But, holy moly. [Laughter]

SF:

Right? I know.

AW:

What was going on there? His fingers were a blur. Except that he—the thing that really impressed me about him was that he was as good with getting a tone as he was a note slinger. That was a good model.

SF:

That was the thing that—that was the thing that changed me. Yeah. Because of that tone. And that's probably why we're sitting in this room, is because I pursued that while all my friends were going [making riff noises], and I couldn't because I just didn't have fast twitch muscles. I started pursuing the sound of the guitar and that led to other things eventually.

AW:

Okay, let's hold that thought for just a moment, because I want to get us to *Metropolis* before we get done today.

SF:

Yeah, absolutely.

AW:

So one of the things that's always impressed me about your work—and I say your work, talking about the two of you—one part of it is what I know of you in the studio, you know? And when I go out and hear y'all play sometime back. But since that time I've gotten to know your arrangements and they are really good.

AF:

Thank you.

AW:

Where did you learn to do that arranging? Because Vann, that's not her thing, right?

AF:

It's not. That was all trial and error. I really don't know. I have an instrumentation book from my college days and if I needed to write for strings, well I'd look up the range of strings and I would try to fit it in there. Really, it was trial and error. Scott's clients wanted me to—Scott said, "Amy can do string arrangements." I'm like, "Oh-kay."

AW:

What about—because you mentioned making arrangements for your church gig. Was that a help in—I mean, how did that work to have to do?

AF:

Oh yeah. I think I started arranging stuff when I was—I mean, I was writing songs for my high school choir to perform.

AW:  
Really?

AF:  
Which they performed two of my pieces. Yeah. That was just piano and vocal. You know, choir stuff.

AW:  
Yeah, but vocal. That's—I mean you talk about music vérité. You know what the range is, but you—

AF:  
Yeah.

AW:  
--having the real people do that is another matter, you know?

AF:  
Well the thing was, with me, I didn't know a thing about band or orchestra. Because I was in choir all through junior high and high school. So for me the vocal thing was simple. For me, I didn't know the instruments in the orchestra. So that's kind of been a short cut, because I don't know.

AW:  
So you knew not to write to a thing that was technically capable, but in reality was not something people were going to be able—

AF:  
Right.

AW:  
Because you had that experience.

AF:  
Right. And in arranging my own piano stuff, I just kind of did what I liked. I started doing that in high school, I think. During piano lessons.

SF:  
Yeah, but I think she's being a little modest though. Because I think you started writing very young. You started creating your own musical thoughts.



AF:

I was eight when I wrote *Paddington*, yes.

AW:

Really? About Paddington Bear?

AF:

Yes! Because I read all the books.

AW:

Yes, as one should.

SF:

And she was notating it too, so this is—

AF:

Well, my mom was helping me notate it.

SF:

Sure, of course.

AW:

Okay, so your mom taught?

AF:

She was a teacher. Still is.

AW:

Music?

AF:

Not music. No, she had just played piano as a kid. In fact, I have her piano at my house and that's the one I teach on all the time.

AW:

Where did you learn notation?

AF:

Well, when I was about fourteen I was coming up with all these songs and I couldn't write them down. I knew nothing about theory. I mean, I could read notes and play piano, but I couldn't

figure out how to even start. So my piano teacher—Liz Wallace—hooked me up with David Kaniper.

AW:

Yeah. Right.

AF:

Who was a grad student at Tech at the time. I was fourteen and I studied with him.

AW:

Was that—did he have his synth down in the basement of Alderson's place by that time?

AF:

Yes.

AW:

Yeah.

AF:

Yeah. In fact, he helped me do a pop song demo while I was in high school.

AW:

Yeah.

AF:

Yeah. He, like, put the track together for me and a friend sang it. So I started studying with him, and he told me a few years later at the—what was it—the centennial thing when he came back? He's like, "I didn't know what to do with you." So we started doing college theory, you know.

AW:

Yeah.

AF:

And I started writing down things and it helped me a lot.

AW:

That's very interesting, because he's a guy who's invented his own world way before other people were doing what he did.

AF:

Absolutely. Yeah. That was invaluable training to me.

AW:

Yeah, I was going to say. What a great stroke of luck for the both of you.

AF:

Oh yeah.

AW:

For each one of you.

AF:

It was great. So.

AW:

So, okay. So you've both come to this composition and creation and arrangement world from really pretty fundamentally different kinds of places.

AF:

Completely different.

SF:

Completely opposite ends of the Earth.

AF:

Yep.

SF:

I think that's actually the strength, to be honest with you. I come at it—I am everything that I think about is visceral and an emotional response and it all comes from a position of really pop music. I mean coming from thinking about guitar, bass, drums. You mentioned the Eric Johnson thing. And while I do not care in even in the least now about guitar histrionics, in 1986 when I first heard him—and I was playing in cheesy eighties metal bands—all of the sudden I hear this violin-like stunning guitar tone. It changed me forever. I quit the band I was in. I started pursuing guitar tone. And that album *Tones*—his first album—which was produced by David Tickle, the same guy who produced *Van Halen I*, believe it or not.

AW:

That is hard to believe.

SF:

Yeah. I was in Art School, and I had four art labs that semester. And each art lab you're in class for six hours a week. And for every hour you're in, you can expect two hours of homework, okay? So that's a—so I was on campus just for those four classes for twenty four hours a week. I listened to that album—and this is not an exaggeration—six to eight hours a day, probably five days a week, for probably six months. The same album. I had a Walkman, I was painting, and that's when I started going, "Today, I'm only going to listen to the High Hat." [Laughter] And I'd be going along, and I'd suddenly go—I went, "There's a slap back on the High Hat." Who would have every thought to put a slab back on the High Hat? So in hindsight, that record—and listening like that—is when I started learning how to walk into a mix. So that's the perspective I'm coming from. I'm thinking like that even as a young man. I was already—

AF:

You were.

SF:

--thinking, "This is what the bass is going to do. What kind of keyboard part could you put that weaves in between this and this. How can we--?" Which was very different from your—because you hadn't had any experience like that.

AF:

No, and I don't think about technology at all. Like, I don't like it. I care about the notes and the words, but as far as the technology, my brain doesn't seem to be—it doesn't work that way, really. So it's a good thing yours does.

AW:

What were your influences, musically?

AF:

Chet Atkins. Grew up with a lot of classical. Oh man.

AW:

Did you play guitar?

AF:

Johnny Cash. I tried for a little while.

AW:

Because Chet is a guitar guy.

AF:

Oh I know. My grandpa, my dad, both listened to tons of music. So I grew up on everything from Danny Davis' "Nashville Brass". Lots of—who was the people from—

SF:

Los Indians de—

AW:

Tabajaras?

AF:

Los Indios de Tabajaras. Got several of those.

AW:

Oh yeah. I had their album.

AF:

Me too.

SF:

We still do.

AF:

In fact I listened to one this morning.

AW:

I did. I still have vinyl. I don't think I ever got them on anything else.

AF:

Me neither. But you know, everything—

AW:

Peruvian, right?

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

I believe so.

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AF:

Yeah. So all that kind of stuff. Plus Donny & Marie—we loved that—and the Carpenters.

AW:

Well the Carpenters. Talk about some great composition. I mean it's not my cup of tea either, but holy moly.

AF:

His arranging?

AW:

Yeah?

AF:

Huge influence on me. Hearing all that as I grew up and the different instruments and how he—  
In fact, I transcribed one of those for a piano recital in high school.

AW:

Really?

AF:

Yeah. One of his arrangements from the Christmas album.

AW:

So you were too young, probably, to be influenced by Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys?

AF:

We had a couple Beach Boys albums. And the Ventures.

AW:

Another person whose arrangements were—

AF:

We had some Ventures albums. Yep. All kinds. So with me it was all kinds of stuff. I didn't really get into what was on the radio or pop music until about high school. I had a neighbor next door who shared with me, like, Journey and Foreigner and would copy his records on cassette tapes for me. Really started to love that. But really, Scott introduced me to rock when we met.

SF:

I corrupted her. [laughter]

AF:

And I made you dress better.

SF:

Yes! Which I needed really bad. I was still wearing clothes my momma bought. [laughter]

AW:

Well—so great. So two different points of view. Or two different roots I guess, coming into your musical experience and your arrangement and composition experience. So how—what was it like when you first started working together? Can you describe that? What your process was to the extent that is describable?

AF:

A lot of times one of us would write something.

SF:

Yeah.

AF:

Like, you'd write a guitar piece and then record it on your 8-track and say, "Hey, can you put piano to this?" And so I would spend time at the piano and figure out what I wanted to do, or vice versa.

SF:

Yeah, that happened and that still happens a lot. You know, jumping ahead to *Metropolis* or *Click* or when we did *Between Earth and Sky*. The soundtrack that—like, we have a place—we have a house in Colorado Springs that was my grandfather's house. When he passed away my family kept it and that's our escape. That's our sanctuary for writing. So she'll set up in one room [phone vibrating] and I'll set up in another room—Yeah, if you need to get it don't hesitate.

AW:

No, that wasn't it. I do have that call that will come in sometime around 4:00 that I have to stop and take.

AF:

Sure.



SF:

Not a big deal. So she'll set up in one room and I'll set up in another. We'll go over the game place. Like, what are we thinking? We'll like out the arc. "What do you feel passionate about working on?" "Well, I feel this theme." "Great, you take that. I feel good—I feel like I have something for this." We'll go work on that and then we'll come and compare notes.

AF:

At the end of the day.

SF:

And critique each other, too.

AF:

Right.

SF:

We're pretty brutal, I mean—

AF:

We have to be. And there's—

SF:

One of the things—

AW:

But you're not looking over each other's shoulders when you're doing these things? You do them—

AF:

Not really.

AW:

You do them apart and then bring them back together? Apart, bring them back together? That's what it sounds like.

AF:

Sometimes.

SF:

Yeah. Sometimes we write in the same room.

AF:

But sometimes like you'll bring your amp into the room and I'm in and we put it together.

SF:

Like, "Flicker" happened that way. We just worked in the same room together and we just wrote it simultaneously. It was like, "We need a bass part." "Okay, I'll grab the bass." "Hey, it needs a synth line." Okay, she'd go get on the synth. We just—

AF:

That happened with one of the—at least one of the scenes in *Metropolis*, too. The catacombs.

SF:

Yeah. Oh that's right. I forgot about that.

AF:

We wrote that. Yeah, we were both in there together.

SF:

I think both of us are very informed by visual art. One of the things we love to do the most is go to museums and I think that the recognition that we have that all of that is one thing with music, with poetry, with everything, literature. And I think because of that we have kind of an aesthetic that is different than, say, someone who only listens to pop music. Because even though that may be where I come from—I come from rock music—that's not all I listen to. Just because Amy came from where she came from, that's not her—

AF:

No, I really have kind of a rock and roll heart, truth be told.

SF:

Yeah, she does. And there's a depth of experience there. That we've experienced a lot of art and a lot of music and that that all comes into play. But one of the things that we learned early on—one of the things that was really informative to me in art school that we talked about—was the difference between art and craft.

AW:

Who was chief proponent of that difference?

SF:

I would say that was Billy Bagley, for me. Bill was a huge influence on me. Glassblower, sculptor. Him and Verne Funk.

AW:

I don't know Verne Funk.

SF:

He was clay—did clay work. I almost minored in clay.

AW:

Well Tech had a really strong program in clay, I know.

SF:

They did. Yeah, because that's where I met James Watkins and Sarah.

AW:

In fact, some of my friends who are painters in other things now were—Duward Campbell, other people—studied clay or ceramics, you know.

SF:

I almost minored in that, except having your hands in water all day long was not conducive to guitar.

AW:

It's not good for playing the guitar. Yeah.

SF:

But the concept of art versus craft. And so it became very important to me personally early on to make art with my instrument, as opposed to—like, I have never been interested in being a well-rounded guitar player who could go play every gig.

AW:

Yeah.

SF:

I don't really care to play cover songs. I can do it, and sometimes it's fine, but I understand that there's a difference. Craft and art are both useful in our society, and both beneficial.

AW:

How do you distinguish between the two?

SF:

What do you think?

AF:

Go ahead. [laughter]

SF:

I think that's a really—very—

AF:

It's a hard line.

SF:

It's a very hard line. If my grandma painted a strawberry on a basket, that is a beautiful basket and I absolutely love it and it's probably one of the most valuable things I could have. But she's not Picasso or she's not Van Gogh, if that makes sense. Art, to me, moves something forward. Where craft is possibly more useful.

AF:

Sometimes, yeah.

AW:

So here's a book for you—

SF:

More utilitarian, perhaps, is the word I'm looking for.

AW:

--if you haven't read it. Ananda Coomaraswamy's book *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*.

AF:

Cool.

SF:

I need to read that.

AW:

You do need to read it. He's—I'll just give you a quick background. Make sure I don't use up all the time on mine and blah, blah, blah. He is half English, half Indian. His father was—

SF:

Interesting.

AW:

--Indian, his mother was English. In fact, his middle name is Kentish.

SF:

Interesting.

AW:

Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy. He was an art museum director and curator in the 1930s when there was big discussion in the art world over, "What is art?" Because at that time people were beginning to put things like suits of armor or African masks or Navajo pottery.

SF:

Right.

AF:

Artifacts.

SF:

Artifacts, yes.

AW:

And were they art or were they utensils? Were they—you know.

SF:

Yes.

AW:

And so he did a series of lectures around the United States—

SF:

Oh I would love this.

AW:

And Christian means "Western" and oriental means "Eastern", and doesn't really—

SF:

Yeah, it's not a religious connotation.

AW:

You would—your talking his language, so I think the two of you would like this. It's well-written and it's just a terrific book.

AF:

Cool. Awesome. We'll check it out.

AW:

Get it. Read it.

SF:

I will.

AW:

Next time we get together I'll give you a quiz. [laughter]

SF:

Okay, please do. But it came down to, you know, there's two ways you can kind of be a musician. It seems. You can play all the gigs and you can play at The Spoon every Sunday, which is awesome. I think it's fantastic, these players are so good. It just doesn't interest me to play "Back in Black" again. You know?

AW:

Yeah.

SF:

I know it. I don't care.

AF:

I think art has to come through the filter of something inside you. Craft doesn't. I mean I can play a song and learn it just how it is on the record, but it's not passing through anything in here.

AW:

Yeah, well I think—I think maybe it was—in fact maybe it wasn't Coomaraswamy. Maybe it was Dillon Thomas who said, "Art presupposes craft, but craft doesn't presuppose art."

SF:

Yes.

AW:

You know.

SF:

I agree.

AW:

And I thought that was an interesting distinction.

AF:

That is. Yeah.

SF:

And I think that that concept of art versus craft has been a part of us forever. That that is something we determined early on that we wanted. As a matter of fact, we had a mission statement, which was to lead an artful life.

AW:

A mission statement for yourselves?

AF:

Our marriage. Our life.

SF:

For ourselves.

AW:

Oh cool. So when like when we go over to your house to eat is it on the—[laughter]

SF:

No, but it used to be, actually. I used to draw stuff on the walls really huge. I guess we don't need that—

AW:

Right.

SF:

--self-motivation quite as much as we did when we were young, because there's habit involved now, maybe. You know what I mean?



AF:  
Yeah.

SF:  
But yes, we used to do stuff like that. “Let’s create a mission for this band,” or “Let’s create a mission for this project.” And we thought like that.

SF:  
Where did you come onto that as young snots, as you said earlier? Not very many people come up with a mission statement for their band.

AF:  
That was you. I’m sure.

SF:  
I was teaching a class called—I created a class at South Plains College called Performance and Promotion for the Independent Musician. It was basically how to develop marching orders and go do it.

AF:  
Yeah. Marching orders for yourself.

AF:  
But this was—we decided that before that.

SF:  
But we had that years before.

AF:  
When we got married.

AW:  
Yeah, I was going to say. It sounded like it was earlier than your South Plains—

SF:  
This was when we got married. How the heck did we get that crap?

AF:  
I don’t know. [Laughter] Beats me.

SF:

No idea where it came from.

AF:

We were young and idealistic, I guess.

AW:

I mean I know in the visual arts in particular—not quite so much in performing arts—but in visual arts in particular, the artist's statement is sort of a thing.

SF:

Yes.

AF:

That's true.

SF:

Absolutely. So that probably had an influence.

AF:

That's probably it.

SF:

I don't know that I can peg any one thing other than we were always pursuing stuff like that. Like, we went and heard Harold Best speak, we'd go hear these great, you know, orders or even theologians, or whatever. You know what I mean? Just really great thinkers. And that has always fascinated me. You know, how to distill that, if that makes sense? So, I don't know.

AW:

Yeah, no, it makes perfect sense. Well, so do you have projects—pieces, works, arrangements—that start at the same time together, as opposed to like a more of a reactive?

SF:

The separate?

AW:

Well, more of a—I mean, I do something and you react to it, and you do something I react to it.

AF:

Right.

AW:

But there is also this where you—because at the beginning it's like, “Uh, here's an idea.”

AF:

Right, right.

AW:

And it grows up at the same time. Do you ever do that together?

AF:

We did that a whole lot more when we were in bands together, I would say.

AW:

Yeah. So writing individual songs?

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

As a matter of fact, with 100 Love Sonnets—when we were in that band—sometimes we'd all get in the room and go, “Okay, today we're writing. Amy, you got any lyrics? Hey, I've got a guitar groove that can work with—“ and it would just snowball.

AF:

We did that more in the early part of our marriage.

SF:

Yeah, we did.

AF:

Because we were always together, for one thing. We worked together, we were on the road together, you know what I mean?

SF:

It was harder when I taught at SPC, because—

AW:

Because you're apart physically.

SF:

Physically.

AF:

Yeah, and I was teaching at home and Rach was—you know.

AW:

Yeah, and you were teaching piano?

AF:

Yeah. Yeah.

SF:

Which still is difficult now, because I'm here and she's at the house.

AF:

Right.

AW:

You still teach piano?

AF:

Yes. And composition.

AW:

And composition?

AF:

Yes.

SF:

That's her favorite.

AW:

I need to—

AF:

I love it.

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AW:

I need to sign up. [laughter]

AF:

Okay. Cool. Yeah. I teach everybody.

SF:

But when we did *Click*, a tremendous amount of that—that one was probably—

AW:

Spell *Click*, would you?

SF:

C-l-i-c-k.

AW:

Okay.

SF:

*Click*. With Ballet Lubbock. There were several of those pieces that we wrote together.

AF:

Together, yeah.

SF:

That we just went, “Great, we’ve got to come up with this. What are you kind of thinking?”

“Well, I’m thinking this kind of tempo. Let’s look at a—“

AW:

So is it accurate to say that you don’t have a preferred or sole way of doing it. It’s whatever the situation dictates?

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

Absolutely.

AF:

Yeah.

AW:  
Cool.

SF:  
And sometimes it's dictated by the sheer workload. "Holy crap, we're never going to finish! You better do these four and I'll do these four." [Laughter] "And then we can meet in the middle!" You know?

AW:  
Co-writing, which is now sort of—it's assumed that that's the way the world works—but that started because you had to sit down at eight o'clock in the morning in your little cubicle in Nashville and come up with five songs for that week. It was brutal, you know?

SF:  
Yeah. And it still is. It is work, you know. Even though it may not feel like that in the middle of it, you get done—you're exhausted. Your brain is [sighs].

AF:  
And we write a lot of stuff on demand, too. Like jingles and—you know what I mean. We do write stuff where it's like, "Come up with something this week."

SF:  
I was always—I was always fascinated—I had a buddy of mine that was a guitar student who was a psychologist for the Air Force. And he was studying what they called the "state of flow," which is the ability of an athlete to go into the state of flow.

AW:  
Right. Be in the groove.

SF:  
Yeah.

AF:  
Yeah.

SF:  
He was trying to teach Air Force pilots how to do that.

AW:  
Without getting into a rut.

SF:

Correct. And he told me an anecdote that in World War II, something like 80 percent of the kills in the Air Force were from 4 percent of the pilots. And my numbers are probably incorrect, but it was an astronomical number. And those were the guys that mentally practiced stuff. And so it became a pursuit of I think both of us to learn how to flip the switch. To go, "It's now time to create." And you have to—there's something about that. You have to practice that to be able to turn that on, as opposed to waiting for the muse to hit.

AW:

Oh yeah. No, if you wait for the muse to hit, you'll be waiting for a long, long time.

SF:

Yes, you will.

AW:

What—but there are—in the study that I do—creative process, because that's what I teach also. I run onto—people always have a—each person have a set of preparedness things that they do. What are yours?

AF:

Hmm.

AW:

Because you were just talking about—

AF:

Coffee.

AW:

Hmm—coffee? You were talking about this—the mental preparation of the pilot.

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

In fact, in my day of in the twelve years that I spent as a policeman, if you weren't thinking about what you were going to do at the armed robbery when you got there ahead of time, you were likely to—



SF:

You're in trouble.

AW:

Yeah. You're likely to wind up dead. So that preparedness is an important thing. How do you do that yourselves for this turning on the switch of creative work?

AF:

One thing I do is I write down—I have ideas come to me all the time, and I write them in my phone as soon as I think of them. So that's kind of a preparedness thing I do, like, all the time. And then once I have enough, I'm like, "Hey, I could write a song with all these, stick them together." Coffee. Always coffee. For me, I need to feel like I have a large block of time. It's hard for me to—

AW:

What do you mean "large"? Are you talking about weeks, months, days, hours?

AF:

I'm talking even a weekend. Because it's hard for me to like, "Oh I can write for thirty minutes before my students come." No. Because then I'm just mad when they get there. [Laughter]  
Because, you know, I finally—

SF:

"I don't want to teach. Why are you here?" [laughter]

AF:

"Dang it. I want think about this." So a large block of time. And I have trouble sometimes when everything around me is falling apart. Like the house is in horrible condition. You know what I'm saying. It's hard for me to allow myself to go take time to create stuff. I'm getting better at it, though. Ignoring stuff like that.

SF:

One of the things that we've found out is that she has to get all the work done so that she feels like she can do something creative. I have to create to be motivated to—

AW:

Get the work done.

AF:

Get to work.

SF:

[Laughter] Yes! Because if I'm not creating I am manic-depressive and I hate life. I can't stomach it.

AF:

Right.

AW:

Yeah.

AF:

Yeah.

AW:

So the act of actually sitting down to the keyboard, the guitar, the piece of paper, the whatever, the console—are there routines that you have for those things that prepare you or make your space open or whatever it takes to?

AF:

I light a candle sometimes. And I often, before I start work, pray that God will write through me. So those are things that I do.

SF:

Yeah, I think faith is a part of it for both of us. For me different skill sets atrophy at different times. For instance, my guitar skills have atrophied greatly because I don't do that four hours a night, four nights a week anymore.

AW:

That would be—

SF:

So I have to, like, actually—there's a huge buildup for me to write on guitar now, because I kind of have to become one with the instrument again. So there's almost like two weeks of—I have to remember, “Oh, yeah, I do know more than G, C, and D. Oh yeah I forgot about this. Oh yeah.” And it starts to open again. On the recording side and the general creative side, that's easy for me. You're sitting in it. I walk in here. I've been doing this between forty to a hundred hours a week for the last decade. I walk in here. This is my creative environment. I'll light incense, I burn candles. I do all of that stuff. But the truth is, this entire building is a ritual for me. The whole—this place. Everything in it is absolutely designed to flip that switch, you know?

AF:  
Yeah.

SF:  
That's why the walls aren't white. [Laughs] You know, that's why this is my safe haven. So when I come in here as far as the recording side of it, because I do it so much, it's an instantaneous switch when I walk in the door. And that's taken—that took years to get there.

AF:  
My office is that for me too. Yeah. For sure.

SF:  
It took years. Just as a visual artist has a studio and that studio becomes an extension of that process for them, where they probably create better there. I think that may be the buildup we talk about. About having to have this body of time, is why when we write we go to Colorado. Because—

AF:  
Yeah. For weeks, if we can.

SF:  
Yeah. Because here people interrupt us. Somebody needs me to record something, and I'm a businessman so you say yes. And you say yes to that, which means you're saying no to your own work.

AF:  
Plus all our family is here.

SF:  
Which, well that—black hole that can be.

AF:  
As our parents get older that's not—

SF:  
It's awesome, but it's a black hole too. You know, when you're trying to create.

AW:  
Oh yeah. Your family is the one who says, "You're not doing anything. Can you run over to do this?", "Yeah."

SF:

Yes. You're right. [Laughs]

AW:

And they also say, "This is effortless for you. You can take some times to do this other challenge."

SF:

Yeah. Absolutely.

AW:

And I remind them of the Thomas Mann quote.

SF:

Which is?

AW:

"A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people."

SF:

Yes. So true.

AF:

Right. That's a good one.

SF:

So true. Yes.

AW:

I remind them, "You don't understand, this is really hard."

AF:

Yes.

SF:

Yeah, this is really hard work. And it's torturous.

AF:

Because we are good at it. That's why.

SF:

That's right.

AF:

That's true.

SF:

We have to strive at a different—

AW:

Yeah.

AF:

Yeah.

SF:

I don't know. I think one of the things, too, that we decided early on that has helped us—and it's because we played in bands—was to find a way—and we don't always succeed at this—but to be able to check the relationship at the rehearsal. Hold the work. Which is tough.

AF:

It is.

SF:

When you play in a band—We were on the road for twenty years, off and on. That ain't easy, because you're in a van with a bunch of sweaty people. You know what I mean?

AF:

And your child.

SF:

And at that time, our child, you know.

AW:

I always tell people, being in a band is like being married to five people at the same time.

AF:

It really is.

SF:

Yeah. Except they're all really dumb people, okay. [Laughter] With lots of bad habits and everything. So pretty much the whole—

AW:

And everybody wants to be—to where the pants in the family.

SF:

You are right. But being able to do that.

AW:

So you check the relationship at the door. How to uncheck it when you come out of the door?

AF:

That is a good question.

SF:

Yeah, because it's hard not—just like anything else you do, it's hard not to take it home. So I don't think we've done a—

AF:

I mean, because it's kind of our whole life. So we don't—

SF:

I don't think we do that very well, probably. [laughter]

AF:

Yeah, people hate going to concerts with us because we're analyzing everything. They're like, "I just wanted to have fun." [laughter]

AW:

Yeah, I know. My wife quit asking me, "What do you think about that?"

AF:

Yeah.

AW:

"What do you think about that painting?" And she says, "Oh I'm sorry. I forgot."

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

Yeah.

SF:

And I think that is difficult. That's probably more difficult for me, because I am—  
unfortunately—a workaholic. I am. I love to work. It is nothing to me to be here for fourteen  
hours, you know. It's a little harder now that I'm middle-aged. It's getting harder and harder.

AW:

Yeah, there is that.

SF:

Yeah, there is that. So that would be something that I have probably failed at more than Amy has  
in that regard. [Belches] Excuse me. But trying to find a balance. It used to be much less  
balanced, I think, in some regards, because our band rehearsed in our living room.

AF:

Right. Yes.

SF:

Now it's all in this building. And I lock the—

AW:

You can turn the—

SF:

I can turn the key and go home.

AF:

Which is nice. That is. Yeah.

SF:

That part, that's—



AW:

It's the drawback. It's the flip side of the advantage of having your workplace in your home; it's very convenient, but you can never leave it. You can never leave home and you can never leave work.

SF:

That's exactly right.

AF:

That's right. We did that for a long time.

SF:

We did and it was—

AF:

The web design.

SF:

Yeah, when I was designing websites and stuff and doing graphic design. I mean my child would come through, "Daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy, daddy!" And I'm literally in the middle of a piece of code. [Explosion noise] It's over. So I think you need—I think if you can separate that, that does help. So having this helps.

AW:

When I was in the traveling business in finance, which I did for a while, I had colleagues that—and we all officed out of our homes because we were on the road five days a week, you know. So why have a—

SF:

Yeah. Why pay for that?

AW:

Yeah. Why pay for it and when would you be in it and all that? And I was not good at this, but I had colleagues who would—when they were going to be working out of the house that day, lining up their appointments or whatever—they would get up in the morning, put on a suit and tie, walk around the corner and sit down. [laughter]

SF:

It's as if they were—I was never good at that. I have—really struggle at that.

AW:

No, me either. Yeah. But I just thought it was a clever—a very clever way—

AF:

It is.

SF:

It is.

AW:

--of turning that key.

SF:

Well Amy and Rachel actually—because I would be grumpy—eventually made me a little sign that I could set right beside my computer that was like, “Don’t you dare.” Or something like that. [Laughter]

AF:

The other side was like, “I’m approachable.”

SF:

“I’m approachable.”, “I am not approachable.” Or something. [Laughs] Butthole.

AW:

Medard [?]  
—we toured all those years—Medard toured all those years with Leonard Cohen, who I absolutely adore. But many of those years they toured with Bob Dylan, so I had to ask Medard, “What was it really like touring with Dylan?” And he said, “Well, he had this hoodie. If the hood was up, you didn’t get near him.”

SF:

Really?

AW:

“If the hood was down—“

SF:

You were fine.

AW:

“—he was fine.”

AF:

That really makes sense.

SF:

That's actually pretty kind of Bob. Thank you for giving us a visual cue.

AW:

But when you mentioned your little side by the computer I think, Well, that was your hoodie.

SF:

Yeah, it was.

AF:

It was.

SF:

You're totally right.

AF:

That's right.

SF:

Absolutely.

AW:

Okay, well this is some really good stuff and we're getting right onto four o'clock. I don't want to get started on the other thing and have to break out—break up in the middle. But here's what I would like to do when we sit down next. I don't want it to take too long, because this is kind of nice and fresh. But I would like for us—for you—for us—to take a piece—and I was just thinking of *Metropolis*, because I was so impressed with it.

SF:

Oh thank you.

AF:

Thank you.

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AW:

A big piece of work and a structure, yet a structure that you could use as a base and not have to conform to. So all those kind of things are good. So maybe that would be a piece to work from. But it could be other pieces.

SF:

Sure.

AF:

Sure.

AW:

We don't have to do—but I would like to take a piece like that—I would like the two of you—and let's do a—not a post-mortem, but sort of a blow by blow. How did this come about? And what were the—

SF:

We would love to.

AW:

Okay.

SF:

And there's—it's under the table at the moment, but we may be performing it again this year.

AW:

Cool.

SF:

We're hoping. Because it's the thing we're probably the most passionate about.

AW:

That particular piece?

AF:

Yes.

SF:

We love that work.

AW:

Well then—let us do this too. Do you have a copy that I can peruse? Peruse before—

SF:

I will have to get that for you. It is in—

AW:

That's fine.

SF:

Do you see that? That big sign up there?

AF:

That's all ninety pieces?

SF:

Yeah. That's *Metropolis*. That's the state that the recordings are in.

AW:

Oh good.

SF:

Orange means it's done.

AW:

We have to get a photograph of that before you erase it.

SF:

Yeah, is that—how do you keep track of ninety pieces of music?

AW:

I find I have trouble keeping track of ninety anything.

SF:

Me too. It's a hundred and fifty six minutes.

AF:

I'm so glad you said that, because Scott told me when I got here that we were going to do *Metropolis*. I was like, "Oh man." Because I have meticulous notes as I was coming up with symbolism, as I wrote.

AW:

Oh, how great.

SF:

Yeah, she has all of that.

SF:

Yeah, she has that all at home.

AW:

Okay. Well then let's do this. Let's rather than—because I know much more now about this than I did ahead of time—let's break *Metropolis* down into some segments.

SF:

Beautiful.

AF:

Yeah.

AW:

Like the inception, and the rough shape of it, the refinements to the performance the first time. And then we can—so we can go through these meticulous things and then along with thinking about archiving your letters from Rapunzel—

AF:

Yes.

SF:

We'd love to, and we have all the files and everything.

AW:

This is really something that needs to be archived too, in some way that we could—again, a hundred years from now somebody can walk through it and kind of see your process.

AF:

Cool.

SF:

We would love that.

AF:

That would be cool.

AW:

Okay, very cool. And we can do this at your home too. We don't have to be here. It's wherever you're most comfortable. I don't care.

SF:

And that's great, too. Although we might even be able to show you examples like, "This is the theme here." You know what I mean? And play that.

AW:

Oh got it.

AF:

With the movie.

SF:

You know what I mean?

AW:

Yeah, yeah, okay.

SF:

And so—but I will—we are committed to—we're looking at October or November. And so we're kind of—we kind of tentatively committed to finishing it, finally. [laughter] The studio recordings of it.

AW:

See, and I thought it was finished. I thought you had—

SF:

Oh it's composed. We've performed it twice.

AF:

Three times.

SF:

Or three times.



AW:

Having a recording of it to—

AF:

Right.

SF:

Studio recordings. And the work the musicians have done on it is phenomenal.

AW:

Okay. So in terms of how we proceed, what about—if we have time—I mean if you have time?

AF:

Sure.

SF:

Yeah. Yeah.

AW:

During this time period that you're getting ready to try to put a cork in the bottle, as if that will ever happen—I mean, as if you'll ever want a cork in it—if there are times when we could go back to some of that initial things and look at the notes and we can do that. But it would be really fun and instructive if—when you're doing some work here—

SF:

Great.

AW:

If we could come in and—

SF:

That'd be fantastic.

AW:

--be flies on the wall or whatever.

AF:

That'd be great.

SF:

Don't mind it in any way, shape or form. And there are several pieces that you do something and you go, "I don't like that."

AW:

Yeah. For sure.

SF:

So there's some rework that's going to happen.

AW:

Yes.

SF:

It never ends.

AW:

No, I listen to songs that I—I listen to a recording of a song that I recorded twenty five years ago and compare it to what I'm doing with it today and they're different animals. Sometimes better, sometimes worse. [Laughs] But they're different.

AF:

It's true. Yeah.

AW:

Okay. That would be fun.

SF:

That would be awesome.

AW:

Have you thought about doing a documentary of your process?

SF:

We haven't, but that'd be fantastic. That's a great idea.

AF:

That really is.

SF:

We had toyed with the idea of doing a documentary of it when we first did it. The truth was we composed it in eight months.

AW:

Really?

AF:

And it almost didn't get off the ground for technological reasons.

SF:

Technological reasons. It almost killed us. I mean it was brutal. You know, that's four albums' worth of material.

AW:

Yeah. And plus—although you didn't do it onstage it's a visual—

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

I mean there is that stage quality to it. Which means whatever can go wrong—

SF:

Will go wrong.

AW:

And multiply that by—

SF:

A hundred. Yeah.

AF:

Twenty eight—was it twenty eight people?

SF:

Twenty—

AF:

Twenty-six?

SF:

Twenty-six musicians.

AF:

That's a lot to corral.

SF:

That's a lot of—and especially when we've never done. [Andy's phone vibrates]

AW:

Oh this—I'll have to—[pause in recording]

SF:

--of that. I mean, and I have like event he first—the yellow legal pads of when we first sat down to watch it together.

AW:

Oh that's incredible stuff.

SF:

And wrote all that stuff down.

AW:

Yeah, now I also know—and incidentally, we're back. It's still the sixteenth of February. It's still in the afternoon, although later. [Laughter] We have come up with a plan to go through brick by brick, straw by straw—[laughter] *Metropolis* as a vehicle for looking at your creative process.

SF:

Yeah, cool.

AW:

So all that stuff that you were just mentioning as I was turning on the machine—of the yellow pads and all the records and all that stuff—that's incredibly important. I do also know, though, that this is a—well, is going to be for some time a work in progress, right?

AF:

True.

SF:

It will continue to perform, yeah.

AW:

And I will tell you that we in our archiving world, we are used to doing that. We have one archive called the Sal Collection, named for the fellow who donated the money. But it's writers on the natural world. Barry Lopez, Rick Bass, Gretel Ehrlich, Annick Smith, Bill Kittredge, two dozen of the world's greatest writers in that genre, all of them with one or two exceptions—Max Crawford is dead—but everybody else is alive, and working.

SF:

And still working.

AW:

Yeah. And so it is possible to archive things in a way that you still use them and have access to them. We need that.

AF:

Okay, great.

AW:

And that way—because at some point you will have a big pile of stuff. [Laughter] And so I don't want you to think of us as grandma's attic.

SF:

Right. Yes. Yes.

AF:

Sure.

AW:

But to an extent there is that.

SF:

Yeah, that's great.

AF:

Cool.

SF:

Well, it's just—to be honest with you—it's an honor that you guys even—

AF:

That you even think of us, yeah.

SF:

Yeah.

AW:

Oh no. This is great stuff. To me what you're doing is what our archive is all about. I mean we're not just here to collect stuff from dead folks and put it away. It needs to be something that people can and will learn from. So having a chance to actually talk with people about what they're doing and how they're doing it is invaluable. Not only that, it's the kind of thing that when you go we'll go with you.

SF:

Yeah, absolutely.

AW:

I mean, the things that we're doing like this.

SF:

Well Amy and I just have this [laughs]—you toil in obscurity in Lubbock, Texas for—[laughs] you know what I mean.

AW:

Yeah, but it's—I'll tell you—it's so—I just got back from Santa Fe. I go to Austin fairly often. And I would get nothing done if I lived in those places.

AF:

Right? So much.

AW:

One of the great things about Lubbock is the obscurity. [Laughs]

SF:

You are actually absolutely correct.

AW:

That you can—plus, we can afford the rent here.

AF:  
True.

SF:  
Yeah. I couldn't have this place in Austin.

AF:  
Oh no.

SF:  
It would cost me—it'd cost me fifteen grand a month to have this place. It'd cost be forty grand a month to have this in LA, you know? I mean, this is just unbelievable.

AW:  
I don't know. Austin may be worse than LA.

SF:  
It might be now.

AF:  
Austin is getting pretty—yeah.

AW:  
In any case, point is well taken. That and then there're just so many things to do in those places that you get the same pull on you all the time. How do you—

AF:  
Yeah.

SF:  
Achieve? Yeah. How do you get anything done.

AW:  
Cool.

SF:  
Great.



AW:

Well all right. So let's think about—we don't have to do it right now, but the sooner the better. If you can think of some dates, date ranges, that'll work for you. I think it would be good to start with all the pile of the early notes and things. And then if I can—if there's even a rough video of the piece—

SF:

Yeah, which we can provide.

AW:

Yeah, that I could have ahead of time. It would make my—make me a little more intelligent about—

AF:

Sure.

AW:

--going about how to do this.

SF:

Absolutely. Absolutely.

AW:

Cool.

SF:

Yeah, that sounds fantastic.

AW:

All right. Well, Andy Wilkinson with Amy and Scott—the Faris's—thank you again for getting started on this really interesting trip.

SF:

Well thanks for doing this. It's really cool.

AF:

It's going to be really fun.

AW:

All right. And with that, adios until next time.

*[End of interview]*

