

# **Oral History Interview of Melvin and Sherily Erb**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson**

**May 7, 2015**

**Alma, Kansas**

**Part of the:**

***American Agriculture Movement***

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## Interview Series Background:

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

## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Melvin and Sherily Erb as they discuss Melvin's involvement with the American Agriculture movement. In this interview, Melvin describes his discontent with the way policies towards agriculture have been moving since the 1970s.

**Length of Interview:** 02:35:22

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### Keywords

Agriculture, Farming, Cattle, American Agriculture Movement. Tractorcade

**Melvin Erb (ME):**

See, they've got their head up their ass.

**Andy Wilkinson (AW):**

Let me get you to say that again because I just got this started. That's a good quote and I'd like to have you say it again. "The education system," you said.

ME:

Yes. As far as I'm concerned, the education system is the most destructive thing we've ever had in the United States or any place else. Or as dad was saying in farmer language, "They got their head up their ass."

AW:

Yeah. Expound on that.

ME:

Well, they're not teaching what they need to know. You know, it used to be they had a reading, writing, and arithmetic taught to the hickory stick. Today, they teach them how to ride a bus, run a computer, and shack up. That just seems to be their biggest theory of the whole thing.

AW:

Now, you're talking about from grade school right on up through.

ME:

Yeah. I don't think it has any stopping all the way up to Barry Flinchbaugh. I think he's the leader.

AW:

Yeah. There were a lot of people that—yesterday, I spend time in the morning with a Donna Riffel and Neil Tischhouser and—

ME:

I know them both.

AW:

And Scott Flippo and David Heiens. Well, they all said to say, "Hello," and then in the afternoon I got to spend with Steven Anderson.

ME:

Oh, he's quite a Steve.

AW:

Yeah, and he has said, "Hello," as well.

ME:

Yes. Yes, I talked to Steve every once in a while on the phone whenever I can get an appointment to get ahead of his girlfriend's when I can talk to him.

AW:

Yeah. She came by in the afternoon late, too. I Got to meet her as well. Let get just a little basic information and I want to say for the recording that this is May seventh. Is that right?

ME:

It is the seventh.

AW:

Good.

ME:

Yesterday, was mother's birthday and today—tomorrow's mine.

AW:

Well, congratulations.

ME:

I'm a married an old woman. She's two years—days older than I.

AW:

Oh. She was a cradle robber.

ME:

Yeah. True that.

AW:

Well, congratulations to you both.

ME:

Only sixty-two years ago.

AW:

Oh, really? That's great, and congratulations on that too.

ME:

Well, we—today, they don't teach that. They say just shack up until the first argument. They go find somebody else.

AW:

Oh, my wife and I will have been married forty-seven years in August and if we'd have split at the first argument, we'd have been gone a long time ago.

ME:

Who else wouldn't be? That's all life is.

AW:

Well, this is—I'm talking to Melvin Erb. Did I say that right?

ME:

Right.

AW:

Andy Wilkinson here at his home between Otis and La Crosse I guess.

ME:

Otis and Bison. There's a little town of Bison.

AW:

Yeah. That's right. What is the actual address here?

ME:

[REDACTED]

AW:

Three forty, and is it out of—

ME:

Bison.

AW:

Out of Bison. Okay, and the zip code?

ME:

67520.

AW:

I have your phone numbers. What's your date of birth?

ME:

May 8, '32.

AW:

Of '32, and where were you born?

ME:

Well, I made it a long ways, about seven miles from where I'm sitting.

AW:

All right. Which direction?

ME:

I was born in west and south of Timken and now a little east of Bison.

AW:

Wow.

ME:

This is where my wife was, not born. She was actually born about a mile north of here. Three quarter-mile, but this is where she's lived all her life.

AW:

Yeah. That's really amazing. So, you both grew up in farm families.

ME:

Oh yeah. It's all we've done for three generations on both sides.

AW:

Yeah, what is her maiden name?

ME:

And our fourth generation is not going to do it.

AW:

They're not?

ME:

I made a serious mistake. I sent them to college.

AW:

And that was a mistake?

ME:

Stupidest damn thing I ever done.

AW:

Where are they now?

ME:

Well, one of them lives in Bison. Two of them lives in Bison and one lives out at Grainfield. Our one daughter lives up there. She works for a manufacturing company up there, which I'm sure you don't know, but they do a lot of construction of pretty good size buildings for this country here. But one of the things—it was about two or three years ago, she made a comment when she came home one Sunday. She said, "Dad, you know I—we just finished up the plans and made a bid and got in on a million-dollar building." That was the first one they'd had of that expensive building. They've had a lot of them since. They got about eight or nine crews on the road. One does the foundation work. One does the plumbing work. One does the cement work. One does the erection. Everything is just divided down like that. A wonderful company. Ironically, it's Mennonites or Amish—I was—hardly know the difference, but it's Mennonites and Amish, wonderful people. Very, very wonderful. They treat her as good as we have ever treated her or anybody else could. Yeah, she has a job there, but we've called. We've got a little problem or something else comes up, unless it's on Tuesday—that's payday—she has to keep the Mexicans happy that works for them. After that, she'd go on—oh yeah, she's supposed to be there from eight to five or what the heck ever you call it, but that don't mean nothing. There's time she leaves at two or three o'clock if something else is demanding and nothing is pushing there and there's other times she'll work to midnight. It's just whatever. They treat her just wonderful. Absolutely, totally wonderful, but that's where they are. They've stayed basically close, and they were just the beginning. I really, totally feel absolute nothing but sorrow for 99 percent of the kids that are graduating out of colleges today, and Flinchbaugh is the best example of being a horse's ass as bad as the president. I just don't understand his thinking at all. I was on tractorcade, of course, and he was at a meeting that he was holding, and just in farmer's language, he pissed me off to no end.

AW:

What was it that he said?

ME:

Well, basically—thank you.

AW:

Or his ideas. Describe his ideas.

ME:

Basically, what he was saying is we have perfect control of the farmers today. He said, "If they try to give us trouble, we just let more imported Mexicans come in to take the work away from them and handle them that way. We can handle them with the financing by pushing the interest rate up way too high for them to live," and just basically that type of a thing. When the meeting was over, I was very unhappy like 99 percent of the other farmers that was there that he was basically talking to them, and we went outside and he came out of the side door, not the main door. We were waiting by the main door to ask him a few questions, and he slipped out of a side door. Well, somebody happened to see it, let out a war hoop and that's all we need to know and we all went over there. Well, he came out and I started to visit with him. I happened to be the first one to make it over there, and about that time, his goon squad came out with two-handled billy clubs. Don't know if you ever seen them. Most billy clubs are just one-handed, but there, they got another handle coming off over here like—it was right on the side. And boy, when they get both hands on that, they get that damn billy club between your knees and up in your groin, they can twist and give you pain right quick. But anyway, they started to follow him right as we started visiting with him, and about that time, his goon squad came up there and got to be in front of him to go through the crowd, and I don't know just exactly what the wordology was, but he said something about, "Well, what have you got to say now?" Because he had his guard around him. He said, "All I can say now is I'd sure love to meet you in the middle of one of our pastures or wheat fields. Somebody'd get hurt pretty bad, it wouldn't be me."

AW:

What year is this and where was it?

ME:

Well, I was in Washington DC.

AW:

Oh, it was in Washington?

ME:

Yes.

AW:

Flinchbaugh was in Washington.

ME:

Yes.

AW:

But he's a professor at—

ME:

K-State.

AW:

K-State.

ME:

But I can't really tell you. My memory isn't too good.

AW:

Was it before or after the Tractorcade?

ME:

Before.

AW:

Before, so maybe '78. I know there was a group of—

ME:

It was pretty early.

AW:

Yeah.

ME:

It was pretty early.

AW:

How did you get involved with American Ag?

ME:

Well, most honest thing is saying I made it through high school and I could see there was things seriously, seriously wrong with the most important industry there is in the world, food. But he said, "Well, we got control of the farmers. That's easy. If they are getting too prosperous and doing too well, we just lower the price of their crops." Then he said, "Then, they have to raise more in order to come out, and then we got an excess of food. Then we can lower the price even lower," and he said, "If they give trouble, we can bring in more Mexicans for labor to take them out of that position." They were fighting words to me.

AW:

Um-hm. When you were getting out of high school and I'm assuming you were farming even then with your family.

ME:

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

AW:

You said you saw that there were things wrong. What was it you were seeing wrong? That would have been the early fifties, right?

ME:

Right.

AW:

What were you seeing wrong?

ME:

In 1950, I graduated out of high school. What we could see was wrong is the people we elected to represent us was representing us all right in the worst possible way they could do it to shanghai us when they're there still doing it today. The only you can tell if a politician is lying is to see if his jaws are moving. That's what has to happen for him to talk and he never tells the truth. He can't tell the truth. I'm just very upset with that whole deal there, but anyway, through the process, he said, "Well, what do you have to say now?" I said, "Well, I would just like to meet you in one of our pastures or fields, We'd have a little discussion and I think somebody would be hurt and it wasn't going to be me." But I said, "All I can tell you now is I'm going to have to go back home and I'm going to take and start growing a beard and look like a third-rate citizen if that's what you insist us to be." Well, I didn't shave that beard until in '72.

AW:

I heard something about you—

ME:

I didn't cut a hair or whisker. The only whiskers I cut is when I was eating a roasting ear, and it wouldn't want to turn anymore when I was chewing and it wasn't just silk. I had my thought. [Laughter] I never cut hair. Never trimmed it. Never done nothing. It would get this long and then our good buddy Bob Doyle, he would speak that so much had shrivel up that you're talking about just shaved, and start right back out again.

AW:

I heard that you cut it off as a surprise on a wedding anniversary. Is that right?

ME:

It was on our fiftieth wedding anniversary. Yes. We had that all lined up. We had it in—we had a pretty big celebration. It was not advertised. Just personal invitations and people that knew us, and we had a building that would hold what four-hundred people, so we incidentally were—we live at Bison and we raised bison.

AW:

You do?

ME:

Sure. We had one barbecued, and we had a barbecue and then followed it with a dance and it was special.

AW:

I had an uncle five generations back named Charlie Goodnight who raised bison in the Texas panhandle.

ME:

Well, they're an interesting animal.

AW:

They sure are.

ME:

They've got five animals left now. They were called Digess Cumbie winner [?] [0:14:13] that'll be cleaning up of the herd. We got rid of the breeding stock here three years ago, but they're strictly organically grown. We do not use chemicals. I think they would shoot anybody that even promotes the crappy chemicals. They're worse than the doctors. The doctors get a license to lie and to kill people, but the chemical people don't have to do that shit. And the bankers would tell them, "Well, if you don't borrow money to put in the chemicals, we won't loan you the money

because it's not as secured getting it back," but what they're saying that they know if they do that, they'll get back in return the whole farm.

AW:

Right. When did you start raising bison? How long had you been doing that?

ME:

Oh, about twenty years. We raised—basically, we was in registered angus until we thought it was time to take a little easier when we was—I think probably about sixty years old or something like that. So we sold out our bison herd and—

AW:

You mean your Angus herd?

ME:

What?

AW:

You mean you sold out your Angus herd.

ME:

Our Angus herd, I'm sorry. Yes

AW:

Now, you know, I've been around some bison. I've never raised any, but why is that easier than Angus?

ME:

Well, what we was looking at—I'd say just easier was we're very, very food and health oriented, organically everything, and angus are wonderful, but they also have the most fat in their meat as most any brand. That's just poison is what it really amounts to, and that's the reason we was—we got a bull and three cows, and we want to just raise some calves and butcher them just for food supply.

AW:

Just for you.

ME:

Right. For the family, but it got away from us because we'd always butcher the bulls, first, calves because they grow faster than the heifers, and we was ending up with heifers that was left over

that for some reason about two years later, they had a calf. We finally ended up where we had about twenty-five cows, and we just absolutely could not get the market going that we thought we could get going in organically grown bison. Too many people had the attitude, "Well, it's a wild animal. I ought to be like a pheasant, it shouldn't cost anything." Well, financially, that's the worst thing I ever done in my life going in the bison. I'll give you the quick deal on economics. Today, after the last five, six years, a weening calf coming off of a good cow, not a whole steed, but a beef-type cow, have been bringing somewhere around that fifteen-hundred dollars. Well, a bison has to be three years old when you don't push it with any chemicals or feed like that. It has to be three years old before you can butcher it. Well, at that time, if I had kept my Angus cows, I'd have sold three fifteen-hundred dollar calves, but instead, I had my bison cow. I had to feed it those three years on top of it instead of just one year, and then when we got two dollars a pound live weight, and it was a thousand pound animal, we got two-thousand dollars.

AW:

Over three years versus forty-five hundred over three years.

ME:

That's right. That economics—I never went to school to get spoiled, but I knew that wasn't very economical.

AW:

So why has it cost me so much money to buy a bison at the grocery store?

ME:

Well, there's such thing in between called a middleman.

AW:

I'd eat bison and that's all I'd eat if I could get it all the time.

ME:

Well, we've had—we hoped to have a lot of those people as customers. The only complaint we ever had on our bison was it was tough.

AW:

You just have to cook it different.

ME:

Yeah. You want to just cook it, not spoil it, not bake it. Very, very low heat and take your time, and then it's as tender as anything you could ever possibly get.

AW:

And a lot more flavorful, I think.

ME:

Had a lot more nutrition in it. It's higher in protein than fish or chicken, and it's lower in fat than either of those. They should get one that Ted Turner feeds out.

AW:

Right. You could turn him into a cow, I guess.

ME:

Well, what he does is when he wings them at a year of age, he puts them on a full grain ration, and he'd just absolutely ruins them. But he's not in it for anything except that thing they call money, and that's what he's in it for, so we just said, "Nope. We got far enough. We just got to shut that off." That was the way to do it. I never thought it would get to that extent, but you know what? They was the easiest animal to raise as far as that goes. Have a fair fence, and feed, and water, and stayed the hell out of there. That's theirs.

AW:

Yeah. Goodnight remarked about how they hardly ever lost a calf when they were dropping one, and he also remarked that in a blizzard. They would turn him face into the blizzard, and they'd be there the next day when it was blown through where the cattle had all been chased off.

ME:

We had enough shelter. We had not quite a hundred angus cows, and we ended up sheltering them here in corral and the feed bunk to feed them all inside of a lot, but bison don't care to go into sheds and all. They'd just stand there and face the storm like, "You can't bother me. Just cover it. I ain't moving," and of course, once they break the wind with their head, the rest of their bodies are pretty protected because they don't get wider in the ass then, thinking when you break the wind up here with the head that the rest of them was pretty good. I've seen them walk around out here in the pasture for up to three days with that much snow on their back. It's that insulated of a thing.

AW:

Yeah. Goodnight once did experiments in the 1920s with making—weaving sheep's wool and cloth, and bison hair into cloth, and he said that bison hair weave was far more—had much better insulation than wool.

ME:

Oh, no question.

AW:

And yeah, he was a big fan.

ME:

Yeah, but we tried to get into that market. No, you couldn't get into that market. There's just not that much demand of it.

AW:

Yeah, and they don't produce as much as a sheep, right? I mean, they molt.

ME:

No, no, no. Not as much as sheep, but more than a Hereford cow, but they're a wonderful animal. You can see why they lived out here wonderful on the plains with nothing giving them trouble, and they look so damn clumsy that they'd fall on their own feet when they slowly walked around out there. They can pivot on any of their four feet and turn right around and they got you.

AW:

And they can jump straight up. They're not hairy cows. They're a real different animal.

ME:

We had cattle guards for the other cattle to go in, and we had them standard five foot width, and I'll never forget—we do feed them protein pellets but commercial. That way, whenever we want to get them anywhere when we had thirty heads or forty, my wife and I can have any of them in the corral within less than five minutes, and if we didn't have any pellets we can just take a five-gallon bucket and put some rocks in it—

AW:

Shake it.

ME:

Shake it, and they'd thought it was pellets. This is my wife.

AW:

Hi.

**Sherry Erb (SE):**

Hello there.

AW:

Andy Wilkinson.

ME:

Sherily, this is Mr. Wilkinson

SE:

Hello, Andy.

AW:

Nice to meet you. I hear congratulations are in order for your birthday.

SE:

Oh, that's long gone.

ME:

That was yesterday.

AW:

Okay.

SE:

Seems like every year, you have to have one of those things.

AW:

Well, you hope.

SE:

I guess you hope. I hope you're still on your feet and going.

AW:

Yes. Yes, ma'am.

SE:

You still got your faculties.

AW:

Yeah, that's the real important part right there.

ME:

Well, I agree with you generally speaking, but no, I disagree entirely.

AW:

Okay.

ME:

There comes a time, and this sounds terrible. There comes a time when it ain't worth living.

AW:

Oh, I—no, I agree with you. I watched my grandmother who was Charlie Goodnight's niece—I watched her with Alzheimer's and boy, that's not a pleasant thing.

ME:

I never spend any time in the hospital. I mean, I'd go to the hospital to visit somebody, but I never spent any time in a hospital bed until I was seventy-five years of age.

AW:

That's a pretty good record.

ME:

I had a hell of a time. I had to have a hip operation, and they'd ask me these questions, and I'd tell them that. Well, the educated nurses, they just couldn't understand that, and they would go question me and I'd try to be temperamental and get along, but when the bucket runs over, it runs over. It's very simple. I said, "Now wait a minute. If you don't want me to tell you the truth, don't ask the damn question," and they were like, "Give me an answer. Don't challenge it." They didn't quite appreciate that, but—I just about got out of here on my first operation.

AW:

Just about.

ME:

I just about got out on the fast exit. I stopped breathing.

AW:

Really? That's not a good thing.

ME:

Well, and I know I was, but the medical profession didn't. They wouldn't listen to me.

AW:

And why was it?

ME:

Well, I had an operation, which I never visited a hospital until then, but I know when I went to sleep what it looked like on the top of my bed rail across up there. When I woke up after I came out of it, my God, they had more tinker toys and stuff hanging of that than you can shake a stick at, and I finally was groggy and woke up and my—oh, this is coming from—when I went in, they said, “Well, who’s your family doctor?” I said, “He died several years ago, and I don’t have one.” Well, they thought I was bullshitting them. “Well, we’ve got to have these names on it.” “Damn it, you don’t want an answer, don’t ask a question,” but anyway, they said we’ve got to have a—I was really getting ready for going to my room to have an operation. They said, “Well, you’ve got to have a family doctor.” I said, “I don’t have one.” They said, “Well, you’ve got to have one,” and I said, “Well, you’ve got a dartboard here. Just write some names up on it, and I’ll throw a dart at it, and that’s the doctor I want then.” They didn’t like that either, but anyway, when I woke up, she was standing by the bed and I still remember the words. I looked up, said, “What in the hell is that stuff doing up here?”, “Well, she said you had a little problem,” but she said, “I’ve got it taken care of. I’ve got this test lined up and this test lined up and this test lined up,” and I was just groggy a little bit. I was still awake to have a little mind to me, and I said, “Well, I hope you enjoy taking them damn thing. “Was that for you,” and I said, “No they’re not.” I said, “You’re not going to get me to take them.”, “Well, I’m your doctor,” and I said, “Hey, I got you that quick and I can get rid of you just that damn quick too.” Well, about that time, the doctor who did work on me, which I’ve never heard anybody complain on him, Flesky [?] [0:27:18], for joint replacement. I mean, he—

SE:

Hildabrand. [?] [0:27:21]

ME:

Or Hildabrand. He worked under Manning Flesky. Well, Flesky is still—

SE:

Yeah, but he’s not the one that did it.

ME:

No, but it was Hildabrand, but anyway, he came in and he heard me talking to her and she left a little bit abruptly, and he wanted to know how I was getting along, and just not good at all. I said, “What in the hell is all this stuff doing up here?” Well, he said, “You couldn’t breathe during the operation, and they called a—”

SE:

Code blue.

ME:

“—Code blue,” and that was kind of interesting because the operation was really over, and the PA, that was the doctor, he was finishing up sewing up things, I guess, and cleaning up, and the doctor himself was then talking to my wife and our two daughters were there, and—

SE:

Daughter and granddaughter.

ME:

Daughter and granddaughter. Well the daughter was an RN [registered nurse]. When they said “code blue,” she was up on her feet. I guess and moving.

AW:

Yeah.

ME:

She headed straight for the emergency room because she is a RN with specialty in emergency rooms.

AW:

Yeah, so she knew what that meant.

ME:

Yep, and she went there for one reason. She said afterward, she said, “Sometimes, somebody can’t quite make it,” and I said, “Didn’t matter if nobody wouldn’t, didn’t matter which one couldn’t make it.” She said, “Yes, I could fill in and go right on through,” but anyway, about the time they got all of the paraphernalia hooked up to me, one of those who were watching the monitors said, “Well, he’s starting to breathe now.” So she said they all just looked at each other funny, left the room, and I told the doctor. I said, “I know what happened.” Seventy-something year old man telling a highly skilled physician that I knew what happened, he came walking right up to the bed. I mean this far away. I thought, “Oh, boy. I’m not in shape to have an argument, but one’s coming,” and he looked at me and he said, “What do you think is happening?” I said, “I didn’t say ‘think,’ and I know what’s happening.”, “What do you know is happening?” I said, “Well, we don’t even drink coffee. We do not take drugs in any way, shape, or form.” I said it was just a damn overdose of drugs that they had to give me to knock out most people that are on a bunch of coffee at the slightest, all sorts of backstreet drugs as other then, and I said, “It was just too much for shocking my system, so my lungs quit.” And boy, he walked right up next to

me, took my arm, I thought, "Oh, boy. Shit's going to fly here," and he says, "You know that's making more sense than what everybody's been telling me." He said he's been operating for several years, and he said, "I never saw this happened before." Well, he said, "They just overdosed me." He left and pretty soon he came back in a little half day later, something like that, and he said, "I did some checking. You're right. They did," and the damn fool do that on everybody. They got a chart. They're educated. They got a chart. This is what it's supposed to be, and it don't matter if you never ever had drugs and don't smoke, don't drink, or any of that, and then they hit you with so damn much, your body is going to react, and it just was overt, and Hildabrand was saying, he said, "Yeah." He said, "That's perfectly right. I know now exactly what happened." But anyway, going through that, I just—I hate to say it, but I would much rather take your advice on what I need to do than a doctor. There's a book that I don't know if you've ever read. I read a little out of it. *Dead Doctors Don't Lie*.

AW:

No, I haven't read it.

ME:

That's quite a book.

AW:

Yeah.

ME:

It explains it very thoroughly. They're educated, but they don't know shit. I hate to talk that way, but that's where our education system is going. My own kids, two girls, put them through college. Now they're really good kids. They don't smoke. They don't drink. They don't—on drugs. They don't raise hell or they'd be on the tiptoe of my foot, but yeah, they educated them on what to do the fast, easy way. That ain't what life is all about. You got to take care of your own health.

AW:

Yeah. True.

ME:

When you don't take care of your own, you can't expect somebody else to, but anyway, that's the basic idea that I was in, behind it by cutting it off on tangents that way.

AW:

That's all right. Well, tell me again how did you learn about the American Ag movement? How did that come about?

ME:

Well, went to some meetings that was advertised and how to help or solve or just solve the farm program and just started listening to them, but they weren't no educated professors that was putting it on. It was just some older, good, common sense people that knew things had to change and got involved.

AW:

Yeah. What was the first thing that you participated in other than attending meetings? I know there was some Tractorcades here in Kansas before. Did you do any of those?

ME:

Yeah, I went to a couple of them or something like that, parades generally in town. I went to one parade on my John Deere tractor and I backed through the whole parade.

AW:

And why?

ME:

Then somebody asked me, "Why was you backing up?" He says, "Hell, that's what the haymaking you do is back up, right? (0:34:06.7). so I just show them I can back up the tractor for two, three, four miles. That ain't no damn problem." I'm not smart. I'm just practical and see things. I've had a diploma or two in the School of Hard Knocks. That's what you learn from, but that's how I got involved in it, and—

AW:

So you went probably in 1978 on one of those trips before the Tractorcade ended.

ME:

We went as far as Topeka on that one Tractorcade, and then from there, we went on into DC a year later, wasn't it?

SE:

I think so. That was when NFO [**National Farmers Organization**] kind of dissolved and you went from one to the other.

ME:

Right, because there was quite a separation there, which I'm sure you are aware of. The Kansas group that allowed those others, they were so loosely organized that it was upsetting up the

government because there's no one head they could get in and pollute or threaten and control the whole thing because there was no person heading the whole thing.

AW:

Yeah, it wasn't—it was a group of people and not an organization.

ME:

That's right, and then they set up the thing in Texas, which I am not happy with and never have been happy with.

AW:

You're talking about Gerald McCathern and—

ME:

Yes, and I like McCathern. He's a good solid boy, but they set that thing up with such a thing that they had somebody responsible and therefore, they could put pressure and control the deal. When there ain't no leaders, they can't control them. It's just that simple, and McCathern, he's a good boy. I mean, I'm not saying anything about him. That's just the way it—they saw what was happening. The top men knew what was happening, and they had to control that group or it was going to upset the whole damn thing, and as a result, you have no idea what we went through when we down with our tractors when we got close to the White House over there.

AW:

What did happen?

ME:

Well, when we got in a line to maybe ten miles from the White House, you always saw patrol cars all the time, but they got a little thicker along the road. And then when you got within a mile, they was walking alongside on the street alongside of you. And when you got right down close to the White House, close to the mall in that area—we had a permit to stay at JFK's stadium with our tractors and to use them to go back and forth to talk to our congressman. They was in JFK's Stadium because they had us in, then when we got down to the mall area, you know where I'm speaking about there? At that point, they had their drawn revolvers showing you how to drive and where to go, and one thing was up over the mall curb into the mall.

AW:

Into the mall itself. So the police themselves are directing you into it.

ME:

Oh, hell yes. It was within eight, ten feet of each other. Each one with their drawn revolver showing which way to go, and that curbing—have you ever been to the mall?

AW:

Um-hm.

ME:

That curbing is the highest damn curbing I ever saw anywhere and that's something, but I know it was that high.

AW:

That was about a foot, isn't it? Something like that, yeah.

ME:

Yeah, and we was pulling behind—several of the tractors that was pulling behind them was a small camper thing that they slept in, and they left their plumbing up on the curbing because it was just stripped out underneath the vehicle. And then they put us in the mall area, and we could not get out of there for three days.

AW:

Yeah. Do I remember correctly that they put a bunch of dump trucks and—

ME:

Oh, everything they could get a hold of. The whole mall area, and that's a pretty big area. That was either buildings or any open spot, was lined up and blocked their trucks or anything they could have. And I couldn't out of the mall and I couldn't get to a phone for about I think three or four days, and when I could get to a phone and call her, she gave me a sermon of, "How come your up on the mall tearing it up?" I says, "What do you do when they got drawn revolvers and showing you with the drawn revolver where you are supposed to drive to?" Yeah, that was quite an experience there. But anyway, we had a—

AW:

Did you get to talk to your congressman when you were there, or anybody?

ME:

Oh, yeah. Those that we didn't really want to talk to and they didn't want to talk to us at all. We was kind of wanting to talk to some people that had intelligence and they didn't quite fit that category, and our dearly beloved Bob Dole, that was—I pulled a nasty thing, but it was comical. That was sometime after the original men that had some meaning, and he did and then he—when

he came back, he came walking down and shaking hands with all the farmers and he wanted to ride the first tractor—on the hood of the first tractor that went in to DC to show he was for the farmers, and he got informed he wasn't an AAM member. He wasn't doing that, but anyway, he came along and—this is terrible. He came along and he was shaking hands with everybody and Money only grew up thirty miles, but was teasing us here at the congressional, and he got to me and he stuck out his hand and I just left my hands on the sign. He looked at me. He knew me by first name and he stuck out his hand again then wanted to shake hands. I said, "Sorry, Bob. I can't do that," and he said, "Why?" I said, "My mother taught me when I was a little kid that whenever I had my hands in shit, I had to wash them and I don't see no basin around here to wash them in." Oh, that really fit like a round nail in a square hole, and oh, he just shuttered and went down two or three people and I knew he was going to look back, and when he did, all I can do was—that's they way it was. He wasn't very happy, but that was just several things and we got out of that. Though I wish would have—I think I got a copy in this house, but I just can't find it—of the Potomac river basin compact. Had you ever heard of that phrase?

AW:

No, I haven't.

ME:

That was what they has set up as an educated man's plan of how they were going to run the country and they was coming from of course, the Potomac River. They called it the Potomac river basin compact, we just happened to have one of those copies. Went into Bob Dole's office the next morning after we got it, and Bob Dole happened to fortunately be there, and it was quite interesting to show him that and he said, "Where did you get this?" I said, "That ain't the point. How come such a report like this is—" and it was on how to control the people, and it wasn't very good, but he was very upset that he just didn't want to listen to us. "Where did you get a hold of it?" So I told him the truth. I said, "I saw it laying on the floor and I picked it up." Now that should—that's not for the public. That was just for them to have. Well, I didn't lie to him. They were nice and kind to us. They let us sleep in the office buildings there in their—and the lights. I don't think they've got switches on in the whole building. They're always on day and night. Well, it didn't take us dummies too long to figure out we could sleep in the daytime and do more good taking a sleep in the daytime in our campers and then we'd go over to there to stay in the building there at night, but we didn't sleep. We had our sleeping bags out on the floor, but we didn't sleep. We had somebody out in the hall all the time, a farmer, and if he'd go coughing like he swallowed something, that meant, "Holy shit. Get in those sleeping bags quick because somebodies coming to check out everything," and we would be in most of the bags and they'd check and go on, and then we would not hear anything, so we'd get up and we went through the files. They didn't have locks on it. You could go through the files, and that's where we found it. It was in the file. We found a lot of stuff in those files that we ain't supposed to see.

AW:

Like what? Like— give me—

ME:

Well, Potomac River basin compact, the young executive committee. That was the two biggest ones, but also we found in there the records that we were importing unbelievable amounts of grain into this country and then calling it a surplus here so they could lower the price down. Real nice crooked way of trying to control you or break you.

AW:

Did you keep any of those copies?

ME:

Yes. We kept quite a few of them. They had real good copier machines because we never kept none of their copies.

AW:

Yeah. You made your own copies.

ME:

Well, we just ran them through the copy machine and you'd get three or four guys working on the machines. It don't take too long to run one through, but I know we got one in this house, but I don't know where it's at. We came back with one.

SE:

Because you won't go through any of your stuff. Where it was, it stays right there.

ME:

Yes, I know. Maybe I'll get old enough one of these days, I'll just do nothing and go through that stuff, but that's a—and they was real nice to us. It was a nice, good place to work all night, and then like you tell them—oh, I don't want to lie to you, but seven o'clock in the morning or seven-thirty, it was time to get out and roll up your sleeping bag, so that when they was coming to the office, you was thanking them for this here place to stay. "It was nice and warm and I sure appreciate being able to sleep here." We didn't sleep there. We never slept there five minutes. We had more important things, but that's how we got into that stuff. And then Bob Dole, showed him a copy of that. We took a few copies to have—well, most of them would be recopied, but showed him the Potomac—that he said, "Well, where did you get a hold of that?" I said, "Well, you know, really, my business is yours. I found it laying on the floor, so I picked it up. Well, and I had one little look to it." My friend found it in the files and threw on the floor. I picked up, but I said, "We want know more about it," and he just got madder than hell. He didn't want to talk to

nobody because we was getting into the playhouse, and that was very interesting. For one, very bottom of the things I think I got off on that by the time she came in was—we met him there and he said, “Well, what are going to do now?” He had his goon squad be in front of us.

AW:

Now, we’re talking about Flinchbaugh or Dole?

ME:

No, of Flinchbaugh, and he was in all these things and as I told him, “Well, all I do, I’d like to meet you up in my pasture, but don’t think that will work, but all I can tell you now is I’m just not going to shave a hair or a beard. If you’re going to treat me like a third grade citizen, I sure as hell want to look my part.” I didn’t shave that until our fiftieth wedding anniversary. For some reason, nobody knew me.

AW:

After you shaved?

ME:

Yeah, my daughter was in college and of course, we were at the head of the table there and I had lined up with Sherily and I told her, I got to talk to somebody and I ate fast and I got to talk to somebody and then I’ll be back. I slipped downstairs because my cousin is a beautician. She started cutting hair. Her husband was there. He had a clipper to clip my long beard. It didn’t get long, we’re talking, it would shrink up to at least half, if not more and it would start back out again. I was in behind it with the electric razor. I think I was only gone about twelve or thirteen minutes when I came back in and nobody knew me, but I took this goatee and I held that while he clipped it off, took a couple of rubber bands around it. I went in and went up to my wife. We were farmers and we were so poor on our fiftieth wedding anniversary, I wore the suit that I was married in and she, of course, wore her bride dress that she was married in. Only trouble is, her dress didn’t fit her quite as good. She seemed to have shrunk and I seemed to have put on weight.

AW:

I don’t think I could get into the tuxedo I wore at my wedding, I don’t think.

ME:

Oh, yes, you could’ve. All you have to do is have a couple daughters.

AW:

That were seamstresses. That’s what I need.

ME:

Yeah, it was a golden wedding anniversary. That makes sense. You split this outside seam here and have her sew in a two inch wide strip of gold cloth on both sides. I couldn't get the coat together. I mean, it was kind of one buttons, by the way, to get it on a coat. But anyway, I wore that and when I came back in, I offered her my billy goat and she kept backing up and backing up and backing up. She didn't recognize me, of course. I heard—she finally recognized me and she saw—I said, "What's the matter?" I know she knew my voice, so she gave me a hug and a kiss and I heard my oldest granddaughter—

SE:

Yes, granddaughter.

ME:

Tell the others, she said, "Who in the world is grandma kissing?" When I got out of Shirley's arms, I went back to her and said, well, "What's the matter, Jackie?" She just about—she was trying to crawl under the tables. She never saw me in her life with no beard, never had. It was very interesting, but we had only AAM members is basically who we invited. It was invitation only and what did we have? About four hundred people, wasn't it? Something like that? Three-fifty?

SE:

Three-fifty, I think.

ME:

Three-fifty to four hundred.

AW:

That's a lot of people.

SE:

It was full.

ME:

That's all the building would hold and I think about everybody, I think maybe about forty or fifty people we invited they didn't show up or it would've been a total jam.

AW:

What was your maiden name, Shirley?

SE:  
Foos.

ME:  
Shirley Foos.

SE:  
F-o-o-s, Foos.

AW:  
F-o-o-s?

ME:  
Steve Anderson was there that you talked to and he had a reputation with his little wheelbarrow he always had.

AW:  
Yeah, with the sign and the field of manure.

ME:  
Yeah, there and then inside of it was a bunch of cow crap. Anyway, so we had to have a wheelbarrow there, and he had to—we loaded Shirley up in the wheelbarrow and he had to take her up and down in the aisles. Who's having our celebration?

SE:  
That was you.

ME:  
Well, I would push you around, but then he headed the dance. He was there. Yeah, I pushed you around at that.

SE:  
You was trying to dump me out.

ME:  
I dumped you into Steve's arms. He was there laughing so I just raised it up.

SE:  
I wasn't it expecting.

ME:

No, she wasn't expecting it and neither was Steve, but all of a sudden he had to grab her because she was in his arms. That was just some of the kind of things we had there. We had a goat. You've probably heard of that goat story.

AW:

I think so. The goat that you turned loose into the capital? Is that right?

ME:

Well, yeah. Somehow the goat climbed over the fence.

AW:

Yeah, got loose.

ME:

That was quite interesting. We went down with Jim Seltman [?] [0:52:12] had a truck in his [chair creaks 0:52:13] down and he also had a school bus, an old one. He'd done custom combining and he had it rigged up with a stove in there to heat it, and that's where he spent quite a long time in the truck. He had a wooden stove in there so the truck where he slept was just damned near to full load of firewood in there, but there was enough room for the goat to be in the back of the—we had the high sideboards on it and gotten on pretty good until we got down to D.C.. And the goat would hear so much activity, the damn thing chewed and ate a hole through the tarp and it was standing there with its head looking out so he could see what was going on. [Laughter] He'd get excited and then, just to be honest, he pissed all over the wood and then when you put it in the stove and started burning it, you knew what he'd done. It was pretty strong. Anyway, through the process, of course everybody knew he was my goat. We was taking Billy down there to see his brother, Jimmy. We had a terrible time of trying to figure out how we could get it to that White House fence. Finally, one day, we got a deal scheduled to have a parade by the White House, and that was what we needed. We stopped in front of the White House and we picked four of the tallest boys there was there in AAM and had them get down on their haunches and then some other boys lifted the goat way up there so they could get the foot of the goat in their hand. One man on each hoof, got right up against the big, tall fence and then on three, we counted one, two, three, and on three, they'd all give it a heap and it just barely cleared it. It kind of tangled up a little bit, the wire, but nothing serious and landed inside with this goat. The capital police went nuts inside of there trying to catch that goat and they had to belt it off trying to catch it and get a belt around its neck so they could lead or drug. It was a ball of that. Then he got out away from them and a bus came along to stop, normally as it did, and as people tried to come out, it went up in the bus. They had to go in there and after the police finally got ahold of it, they drug the damn thing out and took it back in again, but I had it lined up with the boys and I wanted to take and do one thing that they didn't let me do. They was afraid I'd get in

trouble, but I explained to them, I said, "No, I'm not going to get in trouble." I wanted to castrate the goat and hang a testicle on each horn and then throw it over the fence. They said, "Well you'd get in trouble.", "No way.", "Well, yeah, they'll get real rough with you." I said, "Hell no, they won't. I know what to do.", "Well what you going to do?" [Blows nose] I said, "Well very simple. The minute I get the castrated, get those testicles hanging on the horns, I'm going to running and shouting and find me a policemen, that somebody stole my goat and I was afraid they was going to hurt it. I won't be in more trouble." They wouldn't let me do it though, these suckers. But boy, did we have trouble getting up there in that parade. Somebody had an MM tractor that we got it in that had a big cap. It was me and Eddie there. The damn thing wanted to keep standing up and looking out the window and I didn't want the cops to—

AW:

See the goat.

ME:

To see it and get it away from us before we could get it over the fence. The only thing was in there, I could see it, wasn't our tractor, was about an eight or ten inch crescent wrench that he'd raise up and I'd hit him in the top of the head with that crescent wrench. That got him shaking when he got down, he'd start coming up again. I know I hit him ten or twenty times to try to keep his head down and I still couldn't. It was colder than hell. Snow on the ground so we had twenty-one inches of snow the first night we was there. It was colder than hell, but I had the windows and doors open, the window on the door open because every time I hit him, he stomped terrible like a Billy goat, but then he'd start standing back up and I'd have to hit him in the head again with that crescent. And everybody was laughing because here I had the long hair and looked as bad as the goat looks as far as that goes, but we finally got him there and that was our goat story.

AW:

Did you ever get him back?

ME:

No, nobody knew who's he was, but it was interesting, when we was parked there before we got it going, the damn fool ate that hole out of that tarp. We had no way of patching it and he would stand up there and look around and a policeman saw his head sticking out of there, so they, of course, came over to investigate that. They all knew it was mine and I wasn't there. They didn't know who it was, but they said, we know the reason that we can't have a goat. But doctor's orders, this man has got some health problems and he's got to drink goat milk, but it was a Billy goat.

AW:

I was going to say, they didn't check that part.

ME:

No, they didn't catch up on that, so they finally left the goat, but that's in the house here somewhere. They left a note there of showing what the restrictions were on housing for that goat.  
[Laughter]

AW:

You say, you still have that note?

ME:

That is somewhere. I know I brought it home. But anyway, it said how many square feet, you had to have enough square feet so it was comfortable, but still not too many square feet so it would be warm for its body to keep it together, but nobody knew whose goat it was when the police was around them. They were trying to get it out of there. They convinced them, the older had to have goat milk from doctor's orders and all they could do was bring the goat along with them. It was a damn Billy goat, it wasn't no nanny at all. We had a few times of pretty good humor.

AW:

Do you feel like that the Tractorcade accomplished anything?

ME:

Yes, I do.

AW:

What?

ME:

It gave us a little bit of a breather for three or five years. We set it back that much of their agenda.

AW:

Yeah, Stephen said, he thought maybe you got ten years out of it.

ME:

It might have been. It gave us a little time, but it came back stronger than ever and more crucial than ever.

AW:

Did you participate in the Ag Movement after Tractorcade?

ME:

Yes.

AW:

For how many years? Because I know there was another big crisis in the mid-eighties.

ME:

Many. I was involved in all that stuff. I can't tell you the years, but yeah, I was pretty deeply involved in all of that.

AW:

One of the things that I heard a lot from the Oklahoma American Ag members were discussions not in the seventies, but about in the eighties, mid-eighties, about the number of farmer suicides. That was a problem here too, was it not?

ME:

Oh, yeah. There was several of those. Oh, yeah. Everywhere. They was up against the wall. It was foreclosure or suicide. Some took suicide. Definitely knowing that they had insurance that would then help the wife and the family, or the wife raise the family. It's a bad deal.

AW:

Did lenders target American Ag Movement people? All the foreclosures.

ME:

No question, and this you'll find quite interesting, just in this county we're sitting in are some very active members, myself, Jim Seltman, and Darryl Roach. They're both dead now. We had not filed a tax return. Jim Seltman had not filed a tax return for four years. I had not filed a tax return a tax return for three years. Darryl Roach had not filed it for two years. Never heard anything from the internal revenue, but all of a sudden, one day, we all got a letter from the internal revenue.

AW:

All at the same time?

ME:

The same day, we got the letter and I was scheduled at nine o'clock for an appointment, Darryl at ten o'clock for an appointment, and Jim Seltman at eleven o'clock and said we had a right to

have witnesses. I couldn't help it that I, and Darryl, and them were mentioned at the AAM meetings around the area and friends we had. I think there was sixty-five witnesses showed up. It was a pretty small office building. It was full. We was parked out in the parking lot and the door was locked until nine o'clock. I was the first appointment. You'll get a kick out of this, we stood out there and about two or three minutes before nine, went up there and the door was still locked so we stayed outside until they unlocked the door and went in. It said that I should bring my books and records to that audit. First time they talked or contacted either of us. Well I came in, I had a pasteboard box that would fold the lids down, hold it together. That's the way a farmer has to deal with things. I came in and sat the pasteboard box up on the counter, sat my tape recorder beside it up on the counter, introduced who I was. Do you I need to talk to somebody about an income tax situation? They looked around and looked around and pretty soon, there was an older man way in the back end of there and he was pretty old, but he looked pretty damn pale as he slowly came walking up toward the front. He got about ten or twelve foot from me, he pointed at the tape recorder, and he said, "If you touch that, I won't say a word. Problem?", "Turned it on ten minutes ago." That didn't fit too good. Oh, he just really got—he was stammering and stuttering. I said, "You gave me information here and I have the right to ask questions and they must be answered before you proceed with the audit. You want me to have a bunch of records," and this isn't verbatim, but it's as near as I can remember. You'll get the point anyway. I said, "I'm supposed to bring books of records," and I picked up that box and I shook it and you can hear something rattle in it. I said, "I'm putting it on top of the counter. I'm not going to fight you for it, but you better have awful good reason before you touch that box. I'm just telling you ahead of time. That's my personal property." There wasn't no income tax records because I didn't file any, but there was a joke in it. He never did touch the box. He had this little pamphlet, Freedom of Information Act, it said the tax payer had a right to ask questions and they must be answered before you proceed which is standard. They put it in the audit, I've found out since. I had some questions involved there. They talked this way and that way. I said, "I just filed more paperwork. I'm not going to. I got some records in here." He heehawed around and finally, he said, "Well I'll dismiss your audit. You're free to go," so we left, went out the parking lot. Now, the crowd wasn't hooping and hollering and raising hell, but you can't put sixty people in not much bigger than these two little rooms here without them just kind of whispering to each other, but pretty soon, you had to whisper as loud as I'm talking before anyone could hear you. Anyway, we left, went out the parking lot, and we all had some sandwiches made and ice tea and some cookies and we sat out there and waited until next hour and then Darryl went in and same identical story. He asked some questions, they finally said, well we'll just dismiss the audit for you. We were ready to leave and he said, is Jim Seltman in here? That was the comical part of the whole thing. Jim was a—what did Jim stand? About 6'4, maybe or something like that? He was big. He had a little fat, but no, he was big and wore a great, big ted guild hat all the time. Cowboy hat. Cowboy boots. He said, is Jim Seltman here? He takes his hat off and waves. "You bet I'm here and I just can't wait to come back and talk to you." He said, "You don't need to. I'll dismiss your audit now." We went on, but I knew enough and I'd done enough studying that if

you have a letter from them and you just say, the hell with them, and throw it in the wastepaper can, there's a word I can't enunciate right, but you acquiesce the fact that you were not going to do it. Something of that type and I knew that word. Anyway, that was what was going on and having that fun doing it. The interesting thing that I guess I passed up here sooner is—how do I say it? So anyway, then the boy from Salina, the head of it was Salina, internal revenue. They sent him out here on an audit again and told all of us to come back, but to cut our representatives, our witnesses down considerably. We did a little. For some reason, my name was probably more red letters on it than anybody else's because I was the first one, again, they called for that. I was using a little psychology that we had learned. The other fellow was sitting in when I came down, of course. He said, "Have a chair." I didn't say what I wanted to say, but I said something to affect, "Well, I know you're an old man and you're tired and you do your work sitting down all the time, but I'm on my feet twelve to fourteen hours a day or longer and I just feel better standing up and I'm going to stand up." I was using the same psychology, if you haven't caught onto it yet, of what the judges all do. They sit on the podium and they're looking down at you, psychology. You're down. You're lower than me. I'm boss. I was using the same thing on him. I was standing up looking down on him. You seem wrestlers where they come in the ring and they're making all sorts of moves like this and don't even touch each other, just far apart and doing that. Do you really know what they're trying to do?

AW:

I always thought it was part of the act.

ME:

It is part of the act, but there's a lot, lot, lot behind it. They're trying to break your aura and if you can break the other person's aura, he's as helpless as a little kitten. That's what they was doing. That's what I was doing when I was up there talking to him and doing that. Some of the others in the audience, we had a little treaty on that, you can actually use your eyes to swing them across and not hypnotize, but something in that line. They're helpless. A little kitten. You could do anything you wanted to with them. We had a little fun with that. That was quite interesting, but anyway, we went through it and he was saying that I'd refused to have an audit. I immediately, the next day, sent him a certified letter that I did attend the meeting—that I was not going to acquiesce a power over to him because I was there and met my requirements. They just won't answer my questions, because if not, you would've been admitted wrong. A lot of people don't quite understand it. When I came home—I should've said it earlier—when I came home, after it was a month on the road going down and we stayed there for six more weeks, before then, I drove back and they hauled the tractors back on the flat beds, but I drove. I pulled a pickup behind me all the way with a hitch and that had diesel fuel and propane and gas in it also for other tractors. I got off. I lost. I don't know what I was coming at.

AW:

We've been talking about the IRS.

ME:

Yes, the IRS. Okay, yeah. I got back now. I got home, and she said, "Well what did you think?" I said, "Hun, being there a month and then six weeks longer and then driving back, pretty hard to just give you a simple answer.", "Well, kind of, what do you think?" I said, "Well, okay. I ain't ever filing another tax return in my life. I'm sending not another dollar down to them damn crooks." It didn't smell like it, but the look on her face, I thought I'd knew what she'd done. "They're going to take this, they're going to take that, they're going do this, they're going to do that.", "Sorry, hun. I made the line in the sand, and I'm not doing it. I'm not going to send them another dollar." I haven't to do this day. I have not filed a tax return.

AW:

Not since 1979?

ME:

Seventy-seven.

SE:

Seventy-seven.

ME:

Seventy-six.

SE:

Seventy-seven was the last time you filed. You made your papers out in '78, but never sent them in.

ME:

Never did send them in because I made that statement.

AW:

Never?

ME:

Never.

AW:

That's amazing.

ME:

I'm so ashamed of that. I've talked about this at the law class in B. Barton JUCO College several times. I'm just that ashamed of it that I've never filed another tax return in my life.

AW:

And they've never come back?

ME:

Oh, yeah. We've had a lot of interesting times. Very interesting. It's more comical than Johnny Carson, and he ain't on television anymore, but it's more comical than that. I'd love to get out—I wish the mail today, if it wasn't, we'd have another audit and I'd love it.

AW:

Not many people look forward to audits.

ME:

That's what they know. Personally, they tend to scare the shit of you when they send you an audit and you'd do anything to try to get them to come down a little bit with the penalty and this type of thing. No, I had made up my mind. There was no deal out of it, but I was studying and reading a lot more than I ever did in high school. I don't think I ever took a book home from high school. I'm sure I didn't, but I did tie with a woman for valedictorian and I guess they flipped a coin or something. She got that, so I was a salutatorian. We had exactly the same points on each side, but I never had to study and it was just natural to me. I mean, it was just so simple. I had other things to study, those her [?] [1:14:58]. Hell, I didn't need those other things. We had decided, what? About our sophomore or maybe junior year that we were going to get married as soon as we came out of high school?

SE:

I don't know.

AW:

So you did it right out of high school?

ME:

Yeah. We got graduated, of course, in May and it was too damn much work to do here, there, and under until February, when we had our wedding. It was quite interesting. What's it been? About two or three years since I had the last audit? I think something like that.

SE:

At least, or more.

ME:

Anyway, somewhere down the line, they had scheduled me another audit. By then, I'd done a bunch of reading and studying. I was bubbling over with enthusiasm of what I found out. You're going to be amazed. I went in and they asked me these things and I was saying, "You sent me this deal of the Freedom of Information Act, that says I have a right to ask questions and you have to answer them for me to proceed." They agreed and I said, "Well I want to ask you a question." They said, "Yes, you can ask questions. That's perfectly fine." I said, "I got one question.", "What's that?", "Please show me the law that you say I'm having trouble with.", "Well, IRS Code, blah, blah, blah, says this, this, this. IRS Code, blah, blah, blah, says this, this, this." You know what I'm talking about. "IRS Code says this, this, this." I still remember the look on his face when I said, "Sir, do you have hearing troubles?" He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I said show me the law that you think I'm having trouble with, not the code. I know the difference.", "Oh, Mr. I'm sorry, you shouldn't have been called. You're free to go and I hope you didn't lose a lot of time," and oh, he just bubbled over trying to get me going down the road, everything was fine. So I left, and then it was probably another two or three years until the last audit I had with them. Same thing, same office at Hayes. It might have even been the same man, but I don't think so, but here I was again. Told him the same thing. Told him, "Please show me the law that you say I got a problem with." Again, he started in on code. I said, "Code is not law.", "Oh, I'm sorry Mr. You're free to go. Somebody made a mistake calling you. I'll make sure that don't happen." I said, "Well somebody in this office a couple of years, or three, ago—it might've been you, I don't know—somebody told me those same damn words and they were lying because here I am today. You called me back again.", "Oh, it won't happen again." I think it probably won't.

AW:

Is that the last one?

ME:

You're just thinking that just can't be, right?

AW:

That's the first time I ever heard of it.

ME:

Would you get a book out by my bed?

SE:

What?

ME:

Would you get a book from Red Beckman out of my bed? It was Red Beckman that I read that article, that book he had written several years before that. *The Law that Never Was*. It's a nice big book. If you would take the time to read it, I'll give it to you.

AW:

I'll write down the citation and I can find a copy. I bet we have one.

ME:

No, you don't.

AW:

You don't think so? Really?

ME:

I don't think you do. You might.

AW:

No, I don't personally. I just wondered—

ME:

It's *The Law that Never Was*, all that basically is. I'll give you the book. You can take it home. Basically, what it is, is when the Sixteenth Amendment came up for passage, all statehouses of all states like Topeka, here, was given this information to vote on. I'm lying to you, but I think it was nine, ten, or eleven states passed it by, which meant they're not voting today. They're going to bring it up at the next meeting. That's yours.

AW:

Are you sure?

ME:

Yes, if you're interested. I mean, I don't want you to throw it in the wastepaper can.

AW:

No, I'm not about to.

ME:

This is a forty dollar book, but that's in material. I've seen more money then that income tax.

AW:

I guess.

ME:

That's Red Beckman, we knew him personally before, and I knew he wrote the book. He's still alive. Had a hard time finding him so I'd get another case of books, but I got a case of them here not too long ago. Two, three, four months.

AW:

Thanks.

ME:

They were using under Robert's Rules of Order, you have a right, when something comes before the floor, to table it, to pass it by—meaning you'll take it up at the next meeting to discuss it. The proponents of the Sixteenth Amendment were just about as crooked then as they are today. They checked a yes vote. That means they voted for it. When it got to the nitty gritty and got pressed on this, Red Beckman and a helper of his, they went to every statehouse in the United States and got copies in here of the vote on the Sixteenth Amendment. It never passed. When these others that had passed by did vote on it, it turned into a negative. It never passed by. That's when they have to call it code because it never was codified into law. I've done a lot of studying to learn some of that stuff, but it is an absolute ball. I have not filed a return since '77.

AW:

Pretty amazing.

ME:

I've run lots of business too.

AW:

Yeah, it's been a lot of time since '77.

ME:

Yeah, I've spent a lot of stuff doing—incidentally, and there might be a hell of a lot more go through it in the next very short time—have you ever heard of the phrase—what is it, hun?

SE:

I don't know. Be simple?

ME:

On the—Iraqi Dinar. Not international law, but—my mind skips gears.

SE:

Currency reset.

ME:

It's a worldwide currency reset. That's the phrase. It's a worldwide currency reset. There's a hundred and eight different currencies used in the world. [Phone rings 01:23:00]

AW:

I'll pause it.

ME:

Have you ever heard of that currency reset?

AW:

No.

ME:

Okay, they're working on that now very, very, very hard. In that process, the Federal Reserve note is going to take it in the shorts. I think you know, you've got to know, you can't be that stupid, that there is nothing backing the Federal Reserve note. There used to be precious metals backed. They took off that in '64. There's nothing backing it and it's too stiff for toilet paper, so what is it really worth? Nothing, and it's put out by the Corporate United States Government, of which Obama is the President in that. It's the Corporate United States Government, not the Constitutional United States Government. You want that back on or did you turn it on?

AW:

Yeah, it's back on.

ME:

I'm not calling you dumb, don't get me wrong.

AW:

No, I understand.

ME:

I don't think you've ever heard, maybe the difference between the Corporate United States Government and the Constitutional United States Government. One is run by the corporate

people. The other is run by we the people. We the people ain't been running it. That's all you say. There's a big, big move going on on that. Boy I could talk at least two hours on this alone. What is going on, and it got promoted and pushed hard, a lot of people knew it, but they didn't have guts enough or power enough to do anything. Finally, a five-star general realized that when he took an oath and joined the military to protect the United States from all enemies, foreign and domestic, they have now voted—the five-star generals have now voted—that the government is the enemy. The Corporate United States Government is the enemy. That's the sideline of this other, but it all ties in behind the scenes. They're pushing it hard. Mighty, mighty, mighty, mighty hard. We got involved with this five-star general himself. Have you ever heard of the phrase farm claims?

AW:

Farm claims? No, what does that mean?

ME:

I know you're going to think—you have to think I'm nuts, but please check me out first before you feel bad afterward. When the federal intermediate credit system was formed, it was formed for somebody like me that was just getting started in farming, did not have the capitalization I needed and the banks, the PCA, and the Federal Land Bank were the two structures of the federal intermediate credit system to get that. What they'd done, I made application and I'd done that on this house and we built this house, I got a federal loan on it. The federal government guaranteed payment of that note to the bank. They did loan me the money, the bank did, but just in case the shit hit the fan, rather than break the bank, the federal government would take it over and not interfere with the financing of the whole thing. Now, as I'm sure you know, Federal Land Bank makes more loans on real estate than the banks do. They're a big, big, big competitor. That's absolutely, 100 percent illegal. They were only formed to support the bank in case I did have to take bankruptcy.

AW:

To guarantee the loan and not make it.

ME:

They guaranteed the loan, but then they said, well shit, this is too easy. We'll just loan it out ourselves. That went through court and has been heard and the Federal Land Bank and the PCA is their home. That's all I can tell you. PCA operated—I borrowed a lot of money from PCA that really did not need to be borrowed, like as if I had borrowed it from the bank. At the bank, I'd set up a line of credit. You do what everybody else does. You know there's so much you can borrow. One time, we was running a thousand head of hogs in a hog feeding operation and naturally, when you're selling hogs, you would then put the money in your account. You'd go ahead and pay for feed and buy new weening pigs and do that. PCA does not work that way.

They set up for me what I would need all year, but I never did get one dollar of any hog sales. The check was made out to E&E Feeding, which is what it was called, my son and I, Erb and Erb Feeding. Whenever I sold any hogs, the check was made out to E&E Feeding and PCA. I had to sign it, and send it in, and then they deposited it against what I owed them now, but then I had to borrow another twenty thousand in order to buy us feed and hogs to go again. I borrowed a hell of a lot of money, which if it would've just been a bank loan, I might have borrowed fifty thousand and operated within that structure. So I borrowed a hell of a lot money and think of the boys that are putting a penny or two, or three, or four, or five, a cattle in the feeding operation. They're borrowing in the millions. We filed those claims. I do not know of any claim filed by anybody that was under a hundred million when you took trouble damages on it. I never saw one filed for under a hundred million. Stupid as hell, my wife filed the same claim I did, so we filed it double. That was the law. They had been saying that we'd have that money ready for a long time, but right now, they're just saying they can't order nothing with it, it just has to go. They have to pay us our claims.

AW:

Oh, that they have to pay you?

ME:

The federal has to pay it because it went through court. It was carried. It was all over. It was the five-star general that pushed the whole thing because his parentage was in Eastern Colorado.

AW:

What's his name?

ME:

Lee Swashinger [?]. (1:30:45)

AW:

Swashinger?

ME:

Swashinger. You have probably heard of that name.

AW:

It sounds familiar.

ME:

Yeah, he was a five-star general. He's retired, but he knew the problems is his relatives were getting into and he went looking into the deal and discovered that their operating 100 percent

illegal—they never were to make a loan to you, they were only to have their loan that the bank made to me guaranteed by the government, so they wouldn't break that. You know what I'm saying?

AW:

Um-hm.

ME:

Yes, and then he got to helping some boys on that and his reward on that from the federal government was that he spent, I think it was six or seven months in the free meal place, but he's out now and I know more on that, but I'm not going to tell you because some of that, nobody's supposed to know. I'm dumb, but I got some very sharp people that I visit with and we visit over the phone all the time, but it's in code. He don't know what the hell we're saying, but that's all right with me.

AW:

Tell me this, where were the other farm organizations in the seventies and eighties? What were they doing? The NFO, Farmer's Union?

ME:

I belonged on both of them.

AW:

Farm Bureau?

ME:

I was the county chairmen on NFO. I hate to tell you this, they're just a bunch of goddamn organizations, which somebody draw money and bullshit on it to help you or me. That's secondary, not primary. Primary is where they get something good going. I hate to talk that way, but like I said, you or nobody else is important enough that I have to lie to them. That's all I can say.

AW:

Did that happen to the AAM when it became Inc.?

ME:

That is a problem we have with the American Ag that became Inc., because then they got it under one head, that they only had to pollute or buy that one head out and he handed it down the others. When there wasn't no head, how the hell could they do anything with? That was the whole basis behind it.

AW:

Let me ask you this, Greg Stephens, that we both know that set this up is doing a talk this afternoon at the museum in Salinas, called the Last Farm Movement. Somebody asked the two of yesterday, do you mean the most recent farm movement or do you mean that there won't ever be another farm movement?

ME:

I think he meant the last farm movement.

AW:

I don't know that Greg meant that, but what do you think? Do you think there ever will be another farm movement?

ME:

No.

AW:

And how come?

ME:

They got the laws so goddamn twisted. If we would start another movement to go to Washington on a Tractorcade, we wouldn't get out of the state of Kansas. You know that as much as I do.

AW:

You'd be in the terrorist category, wouldn't you?

ME:

Hell yes, I've been in that category for fifty years.

AW:

What about the—you mentioned that none of your kids are in farming or are going to go farming, what happens to your farm when you're gone?

ME:

As long as I can protect it to stay in the family, it's going to be done. We don't have a financial problem. That's not the point, but when I told my wife I wasn't going to file another tax return, I didn't just smoke a cigar and sit on my ass. We've run several entities that we set up. From some of the smart boys that I ran into and got acquainted with in NFO, on American Ag, on the Tractorcade. They're very, very smart and I'm the dumbest one of the whole bunch as far as education goes. They're masters on the computer of what they can bring up, but when it gets into

separating the rat shit from the weenies, I'm ahead of them. That's all I can tell you and I'm not bragging. I'm just telling you the truth. I'm not saddled by having that education to have to sort out of that shit, which is what the college has put in everybody's head for the simple reason they then can control them as robots. That's all they are, robots. That's all the whole thing is and maybe you're involved in it. If so, I'm sorry, but I still never saw anybody important enough I have to lie to because I've got to explain that someday upstairs and I'll lose that argument, so I ain't going to create that argument. We set up with LLC, Liberals of Liability Company. We set up a trust. We set up an Erb Incorporated. We set up many things not knowing what the hell we were doing, but knowing full well, the normal thing is a farmer—I know that business because I'm in it. They worked their whole life putting an estate together. Then upon their death, everybody takes a great big bite out of it and what goes to the kids, which is the whole intent is probably, in a lot of cases, about a third of the assets. Another third got absorbed by somebody else and they didn't even bother to say thank you. They just say, why the hell did you work more? We'd have got more money. Well, we set up a lot of those things not knowing and not with any lawyers saying anything, just a bunch of vary intelligent people that I learned unbelievable from and put it into practice. Now, I thank them tremendously, but hopefully, I've got things taken care of for at least two generations.

AW:

What I mean by that, what's going to happen to the farm, is not so much, does your family keep it? But who's going to farm if your—

ME:

Corporate farmers, definitely.

AW:

The land will stay with your family, but somebody else will farm your land.

ME:

The land will stay with the farmers—with the family as long as my goddamn kids who are getting an education don't cause them to lose it. They'll still have the privilege of losing it and think they was really doing what is smart, and I hate to say that, but I know it's happened. I've seen it too many times. It was just a bunch of dummies that put things together that set up things that we went into, but through the one, the—Leisure [?] [1:38:29] Trust Company, it's never filed a return and the bulk of our income goes to it. Since we got rid of the livestock, we also got rid of a quarter of land and eighty acres land down by Hutcherson. We got married in 1950, doubled our farming operation, bought a cowherd, and went into secure out. That's a bad combination.

AW:

Yeah, it sure is.

ME:

For three years, we sold our winning calves for forty-five dollars apiece. We was raising registered Angus Bulls. We kept them and at three year old, we was getting three hundred dollars for them. Man that is what saved us. I look what it's escalated to today with a nobhead, cross bread calf, at weening will bring fifteen hundred. They had one sell up here at sale barn. A two day old calf brought six hundred dollars. It was all right, but it was still walking—

AW:

Still wobbly.

ME:

Wobbly. That's where it has developed into. Anyway, we've run lots of money through there, so then after we got rid of them, I didn't have no particular love for that, except it was in that sub irrigated land, they called it, the smart boys, down around the Hutchinson, where the underflow comes up somewhere along in maybe November, October, November, and stays under that much water until sometime in June when it goes down and then it's not good grass. It's mainly a three-quartered siege, but it'll keep a cow alive with protein. So I bought a eighty down there, what I soon found out that you had to get that damn hay out of there quick because once the water comes up, you can't get in until the next year. So I had to buy a quarter up that way. I bought an eighty, then five miles from it, there was a sand hill, so we had to then haul hay out of there, put it on the sand hill and I don't care if it's raining, the sand was solider to drive on when it's raining on then when it's not. That's where we stored it all, but I never hauled one bail home in all of those years, but I sold it. Those sieges was the perfect example. Had a high school—he was ahead of me, but he was a senior when I was a freshman. He was doing a bunch of work for the state of planting grass in the road ditches where they put in a detour or something of that type and he had to mulch it, and did the best hay he could buy or straw, you didn't even get really one year of mulching. You know they grind it up a little and they punch it in there. Following the sixty mile hour wind in a opossum belly, loaded it when he goes down, the suction of the wind and him, there's just a cloud of straw in the air behind him where he pulls it out of the ground, that didn't happen with these four—with these stenchies. They lasted for two years a cover.

AW:

Really?

ME:

And he was getting contracts because he had that kind of thing to mulch with and others didn't know why the hell he could, but the state was looking at it, hey, well he moshes it. We got

protection for two years. When they mulch it with a normal thing, it don't work. In five years, he paid me more for mulching hay off there than I gave for the land.

AW:

Wow.

ME:

I never hauled one bail home. One of the best moves I ever made. For some silly ass reason, land had gotten a little more expensive. I gave a hundred dollars an acre and I sold it for a thousand.

AW:

Hundred an acre is what you paid for it?

ME:

At an auction. And I sold it for a thousand. A real estate man was just looking around where he had a lot of oil in that area there particular. Not on this land, but on there. He was just looking for land to sell and people was wanting to put their money in land rather than in federal reserve notes because that's going to get lost, but Peter's that way. He was just looking and called me up to see if I had these two portions of land. I said, yeah I did. He said, "Well are they for sale?" I said, "Everything I own is for sale, but my wife. There's just not a for sale sign on her, but anything is." He said, "Well what do you want?" I said, "What, are you talking a hundred dollars an acre? I got terrible, poor hearing. I just can't hear at all." He said, "What do I have to talk?" I said, "Well at a thousand, I could maybe hear you." He thanked me and two or three months later, he called and said, "Can you hear me?" I'll never forget that, and I recognized voice. I said, "Yeah I can hear you now, but the next thing you tell me, I may not hear." He said, "I think I got a boy that'll pay a thousand for it." I said, "Yeah, I hear that. Get the damn paperwork made out is all I can tell you." There was no tax on that at all. No capital gain tax on it. Running it from a hundred dollars an acre to a thousand. Absolutely no tax on it, just trust. Got rid of it, then the eighty—that was on the eighty. Then the quarter, I still had and I got fifteen hundred on it because it's nice flat bottom land. Right now it's dry, but in the wintertime, you've got to have knee boots if you go to try to walk across it and that ain't even tall enough in some places. Ninety-five percent of it will be standing underwater, but that's what they've done on this corporate deal, on this corporation that we got set up. Trust. So we've done several of those things and I told Shirley—she said, "What you doing this for? You're doing something else. Why do this here?" I said, "Back up. If one don't work, that one has to," because I was smart enough to know, by time you live a normal life and then you die, between the lawyers and the rest home and the funeral taker, they take about 50 to 75 percent of the assets. I didn't really care to give them that, so that's the reason we went that way and it's worked perfectly. I'm getting off to here, but this here, courtesy evaluation, the one that is leading that is Iraq. Iraq, as I'm sure you know, is the beginning of civilization as we know it.

AW:

Yeah, the Tigris and Euphrates.

ME:

That's right, and Husain, history books someday, will cover the fact [that] he was a very wonderful leader. I know today, they say he's shit because he won't listen to what they said and they didn't just hang him, they beheaded him when they hung him. They made sure to rope enough slack so it'd pop his head plum off, which is what happened. What did he have? Anything that I have to know?

SE:

Not now.

ME:

Okay. Anyway, through that process, they have tremendous wealth underground that Iraq was not aware of. Of minerals, of precious metals, a multitude of that stuff because he didn't tell him, not as a dictator, but now, since he died, they're digging that stuff out and finding what they really got. And they are—you could buy Iraqi Dinar, that was their federal reserve note. You could buy Iraqi Dinar basically for the last five years. It varied, but anywhere from eight hundred dollars to eleven hundred dollars, Federal Reserve notes for one million Dinar. The odds are very close that this month, and maybe by the middle of this month, they're going to come in with this reevaluation. In fact, the report I had just last night on a conference call I was in on, they were saying that the Iraqi people are celebrating unbelievable in the streets over there, cause suddenly now, they all have got more money than they ever dreamed to have in their life on their cards, their debit cards. The military, in that, you know, they work for the government just like our military does and they're paid in smart cards, they call them. I mean, it's a debit card, really, but they just got their new debit cards for their next month's—maybe it starts the fifteenth or maybe it started the first, I don't know. But the announcement is, he said, they all were just celebrating in the streets and unbelievable—buying things you never, ever dreamt they could because all of a sudden, they have got money they don't know what to do with. Well that came at a cost. They revalued it now, at three dollars and nine cents per Dinar. A million Dinar is three point nine billion dollars that cost eight hundred dollars to a thousand. It's pretty good return.

AW:

Um-hm. It's a big percentage.

ME:

Yeah, pretty good return. We just happen to have some.

AW:

Oh, you do?

ME:

Yeah, just happen to have some. In fact, it was about four years ago we started—four or five or six, maybe—we've been shying and trying to get away, everything we can, away from the U.S. dollar. The land that I told you I sold was very simple. It went into 90 percent silver coin and it's buried away in a very good place. That's what we bought, other coins. My kids, college graduates, my two girls, they love me and they think a lot of me. I know that, but they say, "Dad, you're getting scammed to no end on this thing, just can't be what you're being told. You're falling for it." I said, "How can I do worse? I'm buying that with Federal Reserve notes that have no backing whatsoever, and it's too stiff for toilet paper. How can you say I'm getting scammed? It can't be any worse. Impossible." But that is in the process of happening and that all came from Morris Washinger and his five-star general where they took it to heart that they had took an oath to uphold the Constitution and defend it from all enemies, foreign and domestic, and they've declared the Federal Reserve system as one of the enemies of the people.

AW:

I'm going to be watching the news.

ME:

Whenever you hear it on the news, you will see it.

AW:

Can I ask you about the stuff that we have out here on the table?

ME:

Yeah.

AW:

Now, you said someone sent this?

ME:

Yes, that is a friend of ours. She said you could look through it and if you see some stuff in there that you would like to have, I'll have to make a list of it, and she won't let you have the box, but anything you want in there that she could get a copy of, we'll send you the list.

AW:

Okay, and I assume this your collection.

ME:

Yeah, this is ours and I'd say that's probably the same thing because maybe someday our—this sounds terrible—maybe someday our kids will get enough brains that they'll see and want to have this to show what we went through in going to take that picture of the shed. I don't know if you recognize any of those or not.

AW:

Is that you?

ME:

That's me. You see the sign I'm holding?

AW:

Yeah.

ME:

And read it carefully so you don't just assume what you saw.

AW:

Yeah, Future Farm Owners.

ME:

Yes, Future Farm Owners.

AW:

Yeah, and who is this fellow?

ME:

A very good friend of mine that is dead now, but he was a very, very, very close friend. Very sharp friend.

AW:

That's a great photograph.

ME:

That boy, what he got a patent on is going to be his family, unless the lawyers beat him out of it, are going to be rich. He built a thing. He's German. He calls it Windhexe. That is the German word for tornado and he creates a tornado in a steel—are you old enough for knowledge of what they call a dust collector?

AW:

Um-hm.

ME:

It looks identical to a dust collector, but it has a flat area up here, then the pointed area down there. You can take a handful of rock off of the road out here, egg rock, dump it in the top, and it comes out the bottom as talcum powder. There's not a moving part in there.

AW:

The wind causes it?

ME:

Tornado. Yes, you put air in there. He shoots in compressed air and he's dead though, now. I don't know what is going to happen to that, but there's stories I could tell you on that for a long time. One big thing is, he's got two or three of them, isn't it in—is it Australia or Europe.

SE:

I think it's Australia.

ME:

I think it is Australia, where they were taking the over burn in the goldmining. They were taking that over burn off and getting to the richer gold and by running it through here and reducing it to powder, they could get over ten times as much gold out of it as they could in any other way. In fact, it was over burned and piled away as rock that didn't have enough gold to pay its way of making money. With this thing, they can get about eight or ten times as much gold as they did before and he got about four or five of them out in the area. The crooks are everywhere and he's had a lot of problems. He's got the United States patents and he's got foreign patents on it, as far as that goes. He don't, but the family does now. Yeah, that's what it is, but I'll shut up and let you see it.

AW:

I would like to look at this.

SE:

She said she would scan that if you want it. She'll scan it.

ME:

She'll scan whatever you want and we'll send it to you.

AW:

I'd love to get copies of the articles. It's hard to decide which ones I'd prefer without reading them all. Oh, goodness. That's a lot of buttons.

SE:

She said if there was more than one, that would be fine. He could have that one.

ME:

Her husband was one of them that hadn't filed a tax return when him and I started. Some of the boys, they had a vest like you're wearing. They had them just plum covered up with buttons like that.

AW:

Yeah, we have a couple of those vests at the collection.

ME:

I never went that crazy into it.

SE:

Sure would be nice if the river basin compact would've been in here.

AW:

That would be nice. I really would like to get a copy of that if you come across it. Now, there are two of those, so if I could take one of those?

ME:

Yeah.

AW:

And these are too good to pass up. There are two of these. You think she would let go of one of those? And also, the alcohol.

SE:

I was going to say, we could give her a call.

ME:

Yeah, well I'm sure.

SE:

That's the way I understood her to say it.

ME:

Yes, she said have him look at it, and if he's interested—

AW:

I'll tell you what, I'll just leave them here and then if you talk to her, find out, and we would love to have, if they're duplicates, we'd love to have them, any of them because they're all interesting. Old patches and buttons and pins.

ME:

That was off the clothes.

SE:

Melvin's got some of them here too.

AW:

Well any of that, the doubles that you don't mind giving up, we'd love to put them in the collection.

ME:

She said she would scan it or she knows that she's talking in computers. I don't. I've never made a mistake on a computer in my life.

AW:

Because you didn't try?

ME:

I've never turned one on.

AW:

Well they'll take over your life. Be careful with them.

ME:

No they won't.

AW:

If you ever turn one on.

ME:

They might take over somebody else's life, but they're not going to take over mine. That's something that you had there?

AW:

Yeah, I've got a—we have a form. We ask permission for you to let us make the interview available to other people to listen to.

ME:

How many other people?

AW:

Well, any scholar that comes in and wants to sit down and listen.

ME:

I don't like that. I'll tell you why. Somehow, I got on a qualified investors list, and I'm surprised I haven't had a call already, but we get anywhere from one to half a dozen calls a day of somebody that's just got a hot deal. Right now, it's oil, where oil is down and they got all sorts of great deals they can make me and I explode.

AW:

Yeah, no, we—the people to whom we make these available, they come into our archive at the school and they have to sit down and listen there. It's not a—

ME:

I'm sure we have no objection for you to do that with what you're recording here.

AW:

Yeah, that's what I mean.

ME:

Yeah, that's no problem, but as far as the buttons and that stuff, no. I don't want nobody calling us up, "Have you got two buttons of this, this, this, and this?"

AW:

Oh, no, no, no, no. No, the reason that we record this interview is so that literally a hundred years from now, somebody can hear you talking in your voice without anybody interpreting your language or your words or telling people what you said. They can hear you say it.

ME:

I'll give them my sympathy in advance.

AW:

[Laughs] That's our interest in it.

ME:

I have no problem trying to help out anybody like that, until somebody, and honestly, some damn fool tries to make a racket out of it to make a fortune and telling you to go to hell at the same time.

AW:

No, we're not interested in that either.

ME:

When you mention students—that reminds me of Barry.

AW:

Oh well, there are a lot of people that have different opinions. That's pretty cool. A lot of different opinions than Barry.

ME:

I'm sure. Boy, he is I think the biggest liberal I've ever heard.

AW:

I'm going to leave you a copy of this too.

ME:

Yeah, I want a copy. We got a copier.

AW:

No, I'm just leaving you a copy that is not filled out so you can see what the form is. Read it if, or if you want, you can take your time and mail it back to me.

ME:

You want me to sign this?

AW:

Um-hm. And you also, since you spoke here.

SE:

I didn't say much.

AW:

I still want your—before we let somebody listen to it—I want your permission. I don't want to do it without you being—I love those little waving hands. I have not seen—

SE:

We have quite a few of those.

ME:

Yeah, we could give you one of those.

AW:

Oh, good. I'd love that.

SE:

There's blue, orange, green.

AW:

We don't care about the color. I just think it's—

ME:

I'm surprised. As much as I think you're on the roads, you haven't seen semi-drivers have some of them in.

AW:

I haven't seen one with that slogan on it, though.

ME:

No, I mean not, but I, myself, felt like an ass, where I meet a semi and I wave and then realize how he had one door stuck in the waste shit. He had nothing to do with it. It looked like he was waving at me so I was just waving back.

AW:

I've seen—thank you—I've seen the little—

ME:

Hun, would you take that down and shoot a copy for us?

AW:

Sure.

ME:

That saves you having any—you don't need to waste this.

AW:

Okay. Great, thank you. I've seen the little waving hands, but I haven't seen one connected with the Ag Movement, is what I'm getting at.

ME:

Oh, okay. I'm pretty sure they're all the same thing.

AW:

That'll be great. I love that one. If you find out that nobody's going want those, I gave you my card and let me know. We'd love to—

ME:

Sad but true, we'll probably find out that nobody wants them after I die.

AW:

That's one of the reasons an archive exists is to have a place.

ME:

I understand that, but I don't want to give it away from the kids if they get enough sense to realize it has a lot do to with the development of our whole country, way of life, and everything else. They're being educated to the point, by their grandkids, we won't know what the hell they're talking about what a farm is.

AW:

Yeah, that's kind of sad to think about.

ME:

I hate to be a damn fool and not see it when it is happening. That's when you have to stop it, if you can stop it. Once it gets so far, there just ain't no way of stopping some of that stuff.

AW:

No, that's right. Things get—

ME:

When the house catches on fire, fifty gallon of water will put it out right quick, but five minutes later, two tankers won't put it out. On that of marshes, that stuff there, I know it'll take a long time for you to do it, for you to look through it and see what you would want her to scan, or whatever the right word is and we'll send it to you.

AW:

The only thing—

ME:

She'd hate to scan the whole box full.

AW:

Yeah, no, don't put her to that. We have a lot of buttons. I just saw some that were kind of unusual. I hate to take it without her being here.

ME:

I understand what you're saying.

AW:

I'd rather visit with her about it. I try to be a little careful about that. The Potomac River Basin Contract, I would—

ME:

Compact.

AW:

Compact, okay.

ME:

C-o-m-p-a-c-t.

AW:

Right, I would really—if you find that, if you wouldn't mind photocopying that and sending me a copy, I would love to—

ME:

If I can find it, you better believe I'll make a bunch of copies. A very good friend of ours that was on Tractorcade too, from Johnson, Kansas, they had been fighting a lot of things and they don't have any of that.

SE:

I don't know which one is the original.

ME:

As long as it can be read, it's fine.

AW:

I think that's the copy.

SE:

That's the copy?

AW:

Yeah.

ME:

In fact, Joyce, that's this woman's name, she's probably got something that you'd never heard of and they're into pretty serious business with it of a fee simple title. Have you heard of that?

AW:

Um-hm.

ME:

Fee simple?

AW:

My wife works at a title company.

ME:

Okay, and nobody seems to understand what you are saying is fee simple or say, you can't do that and all sorts of stuff. The court's trying to tell her that and that is a sharp and very stubborn woman, I can tell you.

AW:

What is her name? Is it on here?

ME:

That's Marsha here. That one I was talking about was Joyce.

AW:

Joyce, okay.

ME:

They live in Johnson, but yeah, they spend lots of time in Topeka. She did when she was younger, but she's eighty-five or eighty-seven now, but she's still there.

AW:

Good for her.

ME:

She's arguing with the courts out there on fee simple and they just don't want to listen that fee simple thing.

SE:

I don't know what you want to do about this. She talked about scan and I don't know what you think.

ME:

This is ours or hers?

SE:

This is all ours. Hers is in the box.

AW:

We actually have copies of the news.

ME:

I don't know if you know much about this magazine, *Spotlight*.

AW:

No, I don't know that one at all.

ME:

*American Free Press*?

AW:

No, I don't know that.

ME:

It's a paper you need to have. I've taken that for forty, fifty years and the headlines that I see on there say, today sounds like boy Dee fell out of a tree and a big bad tree and in five or six months or less or more, you'll be reading on the other papers.

SE:

Is that not the ones you want?

ME:

Well I'm going to give him—I'll give him one of these.

SE:

Russia and Germany, new holy alliance. Europe again.

ME:

Right now, the *American Free Press*, reading between the lines, they're saying Russia is the power. Putin is the power.

AW:

Seems to be pretty strong.

ME:

What?

AW:

He seems to be pretty strong.

ME:

Well, this is one thing they kind of say, that he had something to do with this. This oil price is going down. They're definitely saying that was a move entirely to destroy Russia or Putin, but surprisingly, the polls now are showing where he gained another 8 percentage points with the people. People are saying no and that's the only thing, really, that Russia exports is oil, so they was trying to break his money so he couldn't do things. Damn, near walked into a war and in business with some people I know, say if we walk into a war with Russia, we'll be lying flat on our back. That's what it amounts to.

AW:

We don't need to be in any other wars.

ME:

Well we don't need to be in the hundred dumb we're in right now. I think it is a 120 is going on right now. One thing they did say on Putin there, that the United States was doing some testing on weapons and that they have those—you read about them over there. They were shooting some of those rockets and weapons over USSR property. Putin gave them an order to stop it. They had no right to do it. They laughed at him, but after the next ten weapons that they shot over Russia, they were destroyed within five minutes from the time they left the ground so they decided they better listen to him. I didn't realize that they had that much power there, but I guess it's just unbelievable. The people are backing him like nobody can believe.

AW:

Yeah, I read that. I've got to get back to Salinas, but I really appreciate the two of you taking time, especially in between your birthdays.

ME:

I know people listening to that will say, that boy is not a learner.

SE:

Did you tell him about the Kinsley Library?

AW:

What about that?

SE:

The Kinsley Library, I think a couple of years ago, they had been—

ME:

An open house, I guess you would call it.

SE:

Open house on AAM. They had been collecting all this memorabilia for years and there was some real active members and they've done an awful lot.

AW:

Yeah, I think Gregg Stevens may know those folks.

ME:

Might, I don't know.

AW:

Yeah, I've not been there, but I'd like to.

SE:

We were there and they had so much things, unless they just got it out for that open house.

ME:

I don't know if they have it on display now all the time.

SE:

I bet they do have some of it on display.

ME:

Some is, but I'm sure some of it's not.

AW:

Most libraries or archives don't put everything on display all the time.

ME:

They can't.

AW:

Put it back then take it—yeah.

ME:

It would get old.

AW:

There is a museum—yeah, and it gets exposure to the light and things like that are not good for it, but there is a museum in Lubbock called the Museum of American Agriculture. In fact, it was the idea and partially established by Dan Taylor, who was also in the Tractorcade. A guy from Texas. They're looking right now to put a permanent exhibit in their museum about the American Ag Movement and the Tractorcade. In fact, they were—some of them—do you know Larry Matlack?

ME:

Oh, very well.

AW:

Larry was just in Lubbock yesterday meeting with them to talk about—

ME:

Larry was one from Kansas that was pushing the AAM Inc. more so than the other.

AW:

They're the ones that, many of them are still the ones who are trying to establish these museum collections, more so. I have to go out and find those of you who aren't the Inc. people.

ME:

I like Larry. Larry, basically, is a good kid. Very good. I'm going to give you one of these.

AW:

Oh, great. Thank you. I'll put in a—

ME:

I think you will—

AW:

Oh, this is very recent.

ME:

Oh, yeah. I mean, I don't think you'd want that in a museum, as far as that goes.

AW:

Oh, that's just for me to read?

ME:

Would you want that in a museum?

SE:

It has nothing to do with American Ag.

ME:

No, had nothing to do with American Ag.

AW:

I've never seen one before so I'll be glad to look at it.

SE:

It used to be called the Spotlight.

AW:

Oh, this is the new—

ME:

Spotlight.

AW:

Oh, okay. I got it.

ME:

See, the Spotlight was forced into bankruptcy and the *American Free Press*, the same people run it. They just took it over.

AW:

I didn't understand that. I thought it was two different.

ME:

No, but if you don't mind, and read and see what you think, I would appreciate it if you sent it back. I keep it. I think I got 95 percent of all of them ever around. If I don't get it back, it's not—

AW:

No, I'll mail it back to you.

ME:

But I think you will enjoy it tremendously.

AW:

All right. I'll do it.

SE:

I'll fix a little lunch here, if you got time.

ME:

12:19.

SE:

I have it ready. All I have to do is warm it up.

AW:

Oh, well that would be delightful. That'd save me having to drive and find—eat at the—

SE:

We're are kind of hard down here in the Wild West.

AW:

Well you wind up eating at the gas station. The burritos or whatever. Let me tell you thank you, again. I'll go ahead and shut off this machine, but I really appreciate you taking time.

ME:

I gave you a lot of different things.

AW:

Yeah, said a lot of stuff.

ME:

Ninety-five percent of the people would tell you, did he just get out of the learning? Or is he ready to go into it? But to me, I consider that an honor because most of the people say that, I sure as hell don't want them to think I'm normal. [Laughter] I sure don't want that.

AW:

There's a saying that you're known by the friends you keep, but you're also known by the enemies you make.

ME:

That's right.

AW:

Thanks again.

ME:

That's no problem. [Pause in Recording]

AW:

This is Andy Wilkinson, back again with Melvin and Shirley Erb. Still the seventh of May, and you are just about to—after we shut this off—you were starting to talk about the pictures that didn't develop or weren't there.

ME:

Pictures that weren't pictures.

AW:

Yeah, so tell me. This was the Tractorcade, right?

ME:

Tractorcade, yes. We was always talking back and forth on our business band, which not everybody was on the same one, but there was several of us in there that had that same one talk, like four. As we got closer into D.C., we was having trouble getting through. It just wasn't working right. Well, several of them took their sets in. When they got there, somebody had

worked on them. They already had the message, the one they wanted to bring. They suddenly said, no. They got something that just drowns you out and you can't—they just block that frequency, I guess is what—somehow they do it.

AW:

So that you couldn't communicate.

ME:

You couldn't communicate with it. We accepted that. After we got in there and saw beyond any question, absolute total police brutality, they just beat the hell out of some of that equipment and people. They didn't mind if we'd be taking pictures of it. That didn't affect them the least bit. We took lots of pictures of total, 100 percent police brutality. We'd take them in there and they just came back black when you take it into a quick developing dealer. We thought, well we figure that out. Some of them overnight it—their film back home here and it was nothing but black too.

AW:

Really?

ME:

They were using, beyond any question, because we're quite aware of that, they were using frequencies to block those airways and you just couldn't get through.

AW:

Even with a photograph?

ME:

The photographs were just nothing. Communication was just nothing. They were using what is known as ELF, extreme low frequency waves.

SE:

We think.

ME:

What, hun?

SE:

We think.

ME:

Well, I'm sure that what it was and the reason I can say that is, this is terrible to say, but it's really true. So many of the people that went on the Tractorcade—say you went on there and you took two of your sons with you. You've had health problems and death, a lot of those since then, but the other two sons you had that stayed at home, they never had no effects at all. That's pretty hard to argue with is was it something they were broadcasting to us, and it backs it up when you also see whenever there was any bugaboo happening, they would come out with a shield over their face, the cops would. Well, you would naturally think that's so that somebody couldn't throw acid in their face or something like that.

AW:

Right, rocks or whatever.

ME:

Yeah, no, I don't think that had anything to do with it. That was filtering out these extreme low frequency waves that we were absorbing. That has held true in several families here where the AAM'ers are dead now, and if a son or two went with them, they're dead or near dead. The ones that stayed at home, they're just perfectly safe as all of us. They were giving us that and we—my wife is a witch. She truly is. There's things that she can do that you haven't—

AW:

I assume you mean that in a good way.

ME:

Oh, yes. In the best of ways. Best of ways. She can do things and I know you'll think I'm nuts, but we just have a ball when we drive around the country here. We know that she got an oil rig standing up and we can check and she'll say, "No, there ain't no oil. It'll be a dry hole." Never have they brought a well—sometime—I shouldn't say that-- sometime they did set a pump on it, but you go back a month or two later and it's all cleaned up. Bulldozed smooth, and everything's gone. She can read that. It's a gift you get from above. She found out and read about it in water witching.

AW:

Yeah, you know, at our archive, we have a big collection of books on water witching. Really very interesting.

ME:

She is a witch.

AW:

When did you discover that you could do that, Shirley?

SE:

I don't know. I don't know how many years ago. Back in the—

AW:

Were you a child?

ME:

No, probably in the sixties maybe.

SE:

Probably in the early—

ME:

That was ten years after we was married.

SE:

Latter sixties, early seventies.

ME:

Yeah, I'd say in the sixties and she can tell you how many feet it's going to be to hit water.

AW:

That's great.

ME:

And then she can tell you how many feet deep that layer is and then she can still keep going on and maybe then there's a second layer of water down below that. And she can tell you—they can tell you the potential of the thing, but you never get the potential when you drill, but it's certainly an indicator.

AW:

Do you use a dousing rod?

ME:

Very high tech stuff. Very, very high tech.

AW:

Not just a willow fork?

SE:

Just a welding rod.

ME:

That's too hard on her hands. That tears the bark off of the fork and tears up her hand. You high check a brass welding rod.

AW:

Do you use a pair of rods?

SE:

Yes.

AW:

One in each hand?

SE:

Yes. One will work. You don't need two.

AW:

Oh, you don't have to have two?

ME:

There's one place we hit going on the road that just bugs the hell out of us. It's a bridge over Smokey River, and just for earning this room, we get closer just to see if it's still doing it. She can start witching with the rod and generally, it goes straight if you're not over something. You're witching for water and if you hit water, it will go sideways or whatever you're looking for. On this particular case, whatever she's witching on, it don't matter if it's oil or gas or anything else, that rod will start going in a circle and just constantly go in a circle until we get off of the damn bridge, then it quits again. It's normal. I can't tell you what it is.

AW:

It's real interesting. No one seems to know what it is, but anybody who's been around it knows it works.

SE:

Some of them are not believers, though. They just are not. They think it's witchy.

ME:

I can say this, I don't think we'd be doing any witching for anybody anymore because a very good friend had a witching by the water. They needed water and it was windier than hell that day and it was cold. There was some snow at one of those entrances, but she came up at this certain place that would be a pliable water supply and it wasn't. I just feel so terrible.

SE:

There was two things that was not all right. I did not feel good and I normally got out of the vehicle and walked. That day, I did not get out of the vehicle. I just stayed right in there and that isn't the way I always do it.

ME:

You've already witched from a private airplane—from an airplane flying.

SE:

Well yeah, but there was no way to really check if I was right or not.

ME:

You know damn good well you were. Rick's decided that quick because she'd had him over vain and I mean, she'd just hold the rod and he'd pull up this way and yep, it hit the vein. It would go too far and it'd come back out of it and then he'd turn and come back. It didn't take very long before he was saying—I mean I'm lying to you, but in the distance three, four, five miles, he was saying, we'll be flying over that pretty soon. He might wind two miles this way or three miles that way, but right over the Alps. That was making sense because obviously, they had water there or they would have put a home down.

AW:

Right. That's very interesting.

ME:

I just don't want to do that anymore. I think He up above said, something's wrong and he don't want us to do that so we don't because we have a hell of a fee we charge on doing that. A fee a lot of people have a hard time paying. Two words. That's our fee.

AW:

What is it?

ME:

Two words.

AW:

And those are?

ME:

Thank you.

AW:

I was going to ask—the people that I know that witch for water say that it is wrong to take money.

ME:

You bet. I've had people—people they just couldn't tolerate that. They'd write out a pretty nice check. A very nice check. Three figures. Three big three figure checks. I said, "Will you feel better if I take the check?", "Yes, I want you to take it.", "Fine," so I took it.

AW:

Tore it up.

ME:

I'd tear it up in little pieces about that big of square and toss it up there and watch it flow down and said, "Well now you're happy and I'm happy too." I didn't take the money because He gives you that talent and he can take it back if you're mistreating it.

AW:

I was really surprised when you said you took payment because I thought, gosh, out of all the people I know that do witching won't take any money. When you told me the payment was in thank you, that's perfect. Let me stop this again. Thank you again. That's great additional information.

ME:

Okay. [Pause in Recording] I got another thing. Parenting Incorporated, that was a group formed. A lot of them was from Western Kansas here, where they physically shipped a boatload of wheat to Portugal.

AW:

Were the Campo people involved in that?

ME:

Yes.

AW:

Okay, so Gene Schroder.

ME:

And Elvin Jenkins, yes. They had some grain in it, I think. They shipped a boatload through there and got it into Portugal and they cleared a dollar a bushel above the market here, is what they cleared. That boy wanted another load that year and then two loads a year every year after that. The board of trade found out about it. They shut it off and would not let the second load go through. Period. I didn't happen to have any wheat in there.

AW:

Was that what prompted the trip to the board of trade?

ME:

The board of trade didn't want that to get going because the big grain exporters was not going to let the farmers go directly to that market. They wanted to make that dollar in their pocket. That's the bottom line.

AW:

Right, but I was just wondering if it was the timing was the same as when the American Ag folk, including Stephen, went to the board of trade.

ME:

It was at that time. Yes, it was during that time. In fact, it might have been a short time before that. That's the reason they went to the board of trade, to raise hell about—they'd just shut off a hell of a market for the farmer. The grain companies is the one that got the extra dollar a bushel. The farmer got lost out. I didn't know if you was aware of that or not.

AW:

No, I knew something about it. I didn't know the name, Parenting Inc.

ME:

Parenting Inc. They picked up, somehow, to another member they knew of on the board of trade. As he told one of these people, they knew each other very well. He said, "You'll never get another load like that through the board of trade. That has been shut off." Well obviously so because the big grain companies lost a dollar a bushel commission on a boatload and that holds many a bushel. I don't know how many bushel a big tanker owns.

AW:

Speaking of the Colorado guys, did you participate any in the alcohol plant?

ME:

I knew them very well, and we were trying to get to buy interest in getting into the ethanol alcohol. Elvin Jenkins was pushing that very, very hard and Gene Schroder. That Gene was a sharp point, but no, I never did lose no money in that. We just didn't get it going. Now, that the wind energy, that's one that upsets me. I would sure like to get into the wind energy. I know that's a coming thing, but I've never found a place yet where you can buy a share in a wind generator.

AW:

I don't know. Although, in the Texas Panhandle, there are several wind farms that are co-ops, so that's kind of close. I also noticed on the drive over here on Four, a house, a place that had a wind turban.

ME:

Yeah, there's about three or four of them I know around the area here.

AW:

And it's just one person's turban?

ME:

Yeah, and it don't work.

AW:

It doesn't?

SE:

You're talking about west of Hoisington?

AW:

Um-hm.

ME:

East of Hoisington—no, west of Hoisington. It don't work for this reason, you can't meet all of the requirements and you can't get everything done for it to really work right. There's a very wealthy family. They are putting in a wind farm right now. They are talking of having—they're shooting for forty towers to put up south of Nekoma. They are building, now, into them. They went from scratch. They're the only company I know that's done that. They're putting them in on their own.

AW:

That's real unusual.

ME:

Only one I know of, but the lawyer—there's three sums in there, and you, of course, knew the data then very well. He was 4-H when you was there. I can't say the last name.

SE:

Bannister.

ME:

Bannister, B-a-n-n-i-s-t-e-r. They've been buying considerable land for several years here now. They are getting awfully big. They was buying a lot of just rough, which is where they live. The rougher and the taller the hills in there, the better and now, we're knowing why.

AW:

Right, they weren't looking to plow it.

ME:

No, and a lot of it was too rough to plow. It was just for cattle.

AW:

Where did you say this was at?

ME:

South of Nekoma, Kansas.

AW:

How do you spell Nekoma?

ME:

N-e-k-o-m-a. Along 96 Highway.

AW:

I also do interviews on the wind energy.

ME:

He would be interesting to talk to because the boy that I know, his wife is a preacher now. He's a farmer, handles that. He has two brothers who are both lawyers. One is the head lawyer of Fort Hays State. The other one is a lawyer someplace else. I don't know.

AW:

Do they live in Nekoma?

ME:

No, no. He lives in Bison, right?

AW:

Banister?

ME:

Banister does. His wife is a Methodist preacher.

AW:

What's his first name? Do you remember?

SE:

Ted. She doesn't preach anymore. She retired.

ME:

Well, but she was a Methodist preacher. People was kind of aware of what was really happening, but I know they got a loan from the government. I'm sure they went through that because a lawyer that's big enough to be a top lawyer of the college, he knows his connections.

AW:

You get a big tax break too.

ME:

Yes, I'm sure. I know people was figuring—and they finally got it figured out, but here not too long ago, they had sold over three million dollars' worth of rental housing they had in Hayes. They were trying to get some of their capital together.

AW:

To put these up.

ME:

That would just be collateral, more or less because that was three million dollars they got for those twenty four holes.

AW:

One of those big turbans, I think right now is about a million dollars a pop.

ME:

Yeah, or more.

AW:

Yeah, they're pretty expensive.

ME:

Have some more.

AW:

No, this, I could eat it all, but I don't need to. In fact, I need to get on the road. I need to get back. Thank you so much. This was terrific. Let me end this one more time.

***[End of Recording]***



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