

**Oral History Interview of
Rick and Diane Malone**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson
December 3, 2015
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*American Veteran Interviews***

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Rick and Diane Malone. The Malones continue their discussion of their involvement in theatre. The Malones also reflect on their time living abroad while Rick served in the military.

Length of Interview: 02:25:59

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Keywords

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Diane Malone (DM):

I used colored markers, you know, artist markers. I had quite an array.

Rick Malone (RM):

The stuff there on the—

DM:

We have treasures for you.

Andy Wilkinson (AW):

Oh, good.

RM:

Why are you giving him my beanie?

DM:

I'm not giving that to him. I'm showing you the freshman beanie which we were required to wear when we first entered Texas Tech.

AW:

By the time I entered Texas Tech four years later in '66, no beanies. They were gone.

RM:

They were kind of demeaning.

DM:

But Rick obviously kept his.

AW:

That's very cool.

DM:

I did not keep mine. I have no idea what happened to it, but everybody had one. They had a lot of rigorous rules and regulations for incoming freshman.

AW:

I remember even in '66—well, it was the next fall, '67, when my wife started. She was my girlfriend then, but women still couldn't wear pants. They had to wear skirts, dresses.

DM:

Right, unless you were going to a gym class, and if you had shorts on, you by god better have a tennis racket in your hand. [laughter]

RM:

The other stuff there—

DM:

We decided to just print out resumes for you to—

AW:

Oh, thank you.

DM:

Some names and dates and stuff.

AW:

Oh, that's really great.

DM:

And there is a picture of Ronald Schulz which you may take back to the collection. I have no idea what we're doing with that picture.

AW:

Would you like me to get you a scan of this?

DM:

No.

AW:

Okay. Any idea of date?

RM:

I think that's from when we were back at grad school.

AW:

'70?

RM:

Seventies.

DM:

Well, it's either 1960 or 1970. Somewhere in there.

RM:

Look at his hair. He still have a cigarette in his hand?

DM:

Yep. [laughter]

AW:

Did he quit later in life? I don't remember. By the time I met him, I don't remember him smoking, but he may just not have at—

RM:

I don't remember.

AW:

Oh, this is great. Thank you so much.

DM:

Vera would know and you know what, we keep talking about Vera Simpson. I don't know if you knew her.

AW:

I didn't know her.

DM:

Her son and daughter-in-law live here, and they also went to Tech and you probably—you may have gone to high school with Mike and David Simpson.

AW:

Boy. That is a very familiar name.

DM:

Mike graduated from Tech in '72, I think.

RM:

Something like that.

DM:

Mike and Barbra graduated in '72. Is David older? I think David is older.

RM:

David's older.

DM:

He did not go to Tech. He went into the army and went to Vietnam and was a helicopter pilot and has been living in the woods ever since.

AW:

I'm assuming Vera is passed away.

DM:

Yeah, not too long ago. She retired to San Antonio, so we became good friends again. We entered Tech at the same time, but she was an adult with a family.

RM:

We talked about Vera the other day.

AW:

Just a little bit.

DM:

Even though she was a lot older, we were friends, and we stayed so.

RM:

At that point in time, she was twice as old as we were.

DM:

Yeah, we were eighteen. She was thirty-six.

AW:

That sounds really dramatic, doesn't it? [laughter] And it was at the time, but—

DM:

So we have known her kids since they were little and now we know their families, their kids, and their grandkids. Four generations of that family we've been close to.

AW:

What do her children do?

DM:

Mike is a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the army.

AW:

Oh, so he stayed in the army?

DM:

Yeah and—

RM:

Well.

DM:

Well, he got—he retired in ninety—

RM:

Ninety-something.

DM:

'92 to '96. Something like that, and then he was recalled to active duty.

RM:

At age fifty-five.

AW:

Wow so he was one of those—

RM

He engineered it, and at the point after he was recalled, he was doing military history and he went to Iraq and at that point in time, three of his sons were there.

AW:

What a story. That's quite a story.

DM:

And they were all enlisted, and one, well two are still in the army. No, one is still in the army. One got out, and the third, the youngest, was killed in Afghanistan. The youngest was the one who told the story that there in Baghdad, here he was a Private or something and he was with his company in some kind of vehicle driving through town, and here comes the commander's Jeep or something with all this brazen, and Mike says, "Oh, stop. That's my father," and they said, "Oh, yeah right." Well, it was, so Mike Senior and Mike Junior had a reunion in Baghdad. The Colonel and Private.

AW:

That's really great. That would be a good history to get too. That's really remarkable.

DM:

I told Barbara, Mike's wife, that you were coming, and I wasn't sure exactly what we were going to talk about and she said, "Oh, we'd love to talk to him," so—

AW:

Okay, well before—I probably won't have a chance to do it this trip, but I'll be back not long after the first of the year to do some more interviews with a variety of other people, so if I could get their contact information before I leave, then I'll talk to them, but that's a compelling story.

That's just—

DM:

Yeah, so Mike and Barbara live in town out on north side near where—no, off of tenth. David, his brother, truly lives in the woods somewhere in Austin.

RM:

We haven't seen David in years.

RM:

They don't see him much. They're kind of estranged, but he had some pretty bad PTSD or something from Vietnam, and I don't know what he does, frankly. He stayed being a private for a while. Private helicopter—I don't know. We don't know what he does.

AW:

Let me stop and just say this is the third of December 2015. Andy Wilkinson again with Diane and Rick Malone at their home in beautiful King William district and it's in the morning and we're starting back. Okay, you're all familiar with slating things. Well, that's good information. I'll want to get those contact things. Since we're already talking about Iraq and his brother David having suffered PTSD in Vietnam. Let's start and talk a little bit about the things we mentioned

yesterday that I wanted to get covered which was just generally speaking, the two of you maintaining your professional, theatrical lives while you were doing what seemingly are very contradictory things like being in the military and travelling around the country. We can start wherever you want in that, but that would be a good beginning for us.

RM:

My first assignment was in Germany. After being there a short time, we sought out and found military community theater and we worked. That was—we were in a little town called Butzbach, and the nearest place was Giessen, and I don't know. How did we fall into that?

DM:

I guess we went to see a show and then talked to them and said we want to work with you and the next thing we knew, I was directing a show and he was in it and two teachers in the DODD school system, Department of Defense Schools, were in it and an Englishman who ran the tailored made suit thing at the PX was in it. Rick was the only military and a German who was in it playing the part of a German tutor to the English young man, and we have stayed friends with the German and his wife and family all these yay many years.

RM:

Well the play was "Five Finger Exercise," which Barry did at Tech.

AW:

Really? [laughter]

RM:

I think we even went to see it. Barry and Derwood Jacobs were in it.

DM:

Which is probably why I chose it because I was familiar with it and the cast was perfect for over there. It's an English play, and it had a German in it.

AW:

And so there you were.

DM:

And our German friend was the English teacher at the local high school.

AW:

That was made to order. So is this military community theater something that happens at all military bases?

RM:

It did. I think it is pretty—it's kind of died out. It was an extensive system.

AW:

That's really—you hear about USO, you hear about a lot of other things. This is the first time I've ever heard about this.

RM:

USO is a private organization, nonprofit. However, the army—best description was the title Army Entertainment Program and that encompassed entertainment recreation—it incorporated sports and that kind of recreation. It encompassed libraries, after duty libraries. There's a whole other library system that's official for research for military, and they had things called recreation centers. There were places where a soldier could go and find a musical instrument. Pick up a musical instrument in the practice room and go play and maybe guys put together a little band or something like that. They had ping pong and they had pool tables. Recreation center. And there was the entertainment program. That had several facets. It had the military community theater system which almost every major military installation had a community theater. It encompassed the overseas shows program which I was in charge of in Washington. Somebody in the entertainment system at each post would be the coordinator. When we brought shows there, they would do the logistics for us. What else am I missing?

DM:

Music was part of that too.

RM:

Music and theater. It was an extensive program run out of Washington. For years it was run by a woman by the name of Skippy Lynn, a former Rockette.

AW:

Really? Skippy, S-k-i-p-p-y?

RM:

Yes.

AW:

L-

RM:

-y-n-n.

DM:

When we discovered this program, which I don't know why you didn't know about it living in Fort Sill, but when we discovered it there in Germany, and we learned what part of the army that came through, that determined really his career because—

RM:

It was part of a section of the army called special services which was part of the Adjutant General's Corps.

AW:

Is that where the big picture would've been part of in the filming that was in Astoria?

RM:

Not necessarily, no. AMPS, Army Air-force Motion Picture Service, was a part of special services, and see, the military has an extensive film theater program for showing movies on posts worldwide.

AW:

Commercial movies.

RM:

Commercial movies, yes.

AW:

The reason I was—I've been working on a book and one of the characters is assigned to this big picture which they filmed all those promotional films at Astoria Stage in Brooklyn which is, as you know, is a very historic film and radio set from, I think "War of the Worlds" was recorded there and Sesame Street, but they were a part of the army, not just the general armed forces and they did all those—what we'd call them today, propaganda promotion, but they were pretty straight ahead documentaries.

RM:

See, that was probably a totally separate activity.

AW:

Separate from this participatory thing that you're talking about where people actually on the bases could participate?

DM:

Yes, exactly.

AW:

Got it, okay.

RM:

It was to provide off-duty recreation through soldiers and their families.

DM:

So we discovered that the army runs this thing through Adjutant General's Corps, so after two years in the combat branch, he transferred.

RM:

I transferred.

DM:

Hoping to be part of that.

RM:

It took me another twenty years to get into it. I had a succession of assignments in just administration, paper pushing, running message centers and printing shops and stuff like that. Had some personnel experience. I was the trainee personnel officer at Fort Ord and we sent thousands of young men off to Vietnam. That was kind of tough.

AW:

What years were you at Ord?

RM:

'69 and '70.

DM:

Did we offer you anything? Would you like a cup of coffee?

AW:

No, I'm doing really well right now, but maybe later that'll be good. Thank you.

RM:

'69 and '70, I was at Ord, and we worked in theater there. There was a community theater at Presidio of Monterrey. We did a show there. Diane directed a show at the naval post-graduate school which was in Monterrey.

DM:

That was my first post-Master's first professional job. I was hired to direct. Before that, it was volunteered. We all get together, let's put on a show. I'll direct this one and you can be in it and all that, but they hired me to direct "Brigadoon."

AW:

And so, pardon me for keeping interrupting, but when you would cast—do these shows, were they all very much like what was done in Germany that you would have actors and participants that were not necessarily all military?

RM:

That's true.

DM:

Right.

AW:

So it really was a community theater, but it was organized through the base.

DM:

Yeah, there was a sort of an unwritten suggestion that at least fifty percent of the participants be active duty military or retired. Military connected. I don't think that's true out at Fort Sam anymore. I think all those kids who do the shows at Harlequin have nothing to do with the military.

RM:

No, I don't think Harlequin has much to do with military either. There's a long running dinner theater at Fort Sam, Houston. The Harlequin Dinner Theater. It's been out there for forty years or more. Its quality goes up and down, as do all of the community theaters. You go through feast and famine in terms of quality and participants. People die.

AW:

Well, and it's so dependent upon the individuals who are doing that at any given time. That's really interesting. I didn't know one stick about this military community theater. That's very, very interesting.

DM:

The entertainment director at each post—that is a real—it was a real closed circle, like a fraternity except it was more of a sorority in those days. A lot of women ran this. A lot of them came out of the USO, I think. They were Donut Dollies.

RM:

Staffing was usually a combination of appropriated fund personnel, and that's people that are paid through your tax moneys, general schedule employees. And non appropriated fund employees. Now, non-appropriated funds come from several sources. The largest of which is the profits from the exchange system.

AW:

The PX's?

RM:

There are a lot of profit making activities on posts and bases now. Back in the eighties, they cut a deal with Burger King. There are Burger King Franchises on almost every installation, army and air force now and the post base gets a cut. That goes into the welfare funds. There are other activities that have fees and what have you and so those generate thoughts. That money is used—and overseas, in Germany particularly, there are slot machines. Profits from slot machines go into the welfare funds. That pays the salaries of the not appropriated fund employees.

AW:

Would these theaters be restricted to bases that weren't combat? Like you wouldn't have had that theater activity say in Vietnam?

RM:

No, no. There were recreation centers at various bases.

AW:

Right, but they wouldn't do theater.

RM:

Well, I can't remember whether they took theater productions. When I was with entertainment, we booked theater productions. Cut-down versions, ninety-minute versions of popular theater musicals usually. Usually from colleges and universities.

AW:

And then you would tour them to different places.

RM:

Tour them to different places. The original program was started in the fifties by Father Hartke. Father Gilbert Hartke out of Catholic University. He took the first Shakespeare production overseas to Korea.

AW:

H-a-r-t-k-e?

RM:

Yes.

DM:

There's not a D in there? There's not Hardtke?

RM:

No.

DM:

It's just Hartke.

RM:

And who else was—it was somebody else involved in that as a founder. This was in the fifties, Korea. The system drew out of that, but the shows were meant primarily—and we had to always keep that in mind—to take entertainment to remote locations. There are lots of onesies, twosie, threesie, maybe five or six guys on a hill somewhere. Observation post or spy places.

AW:

Satellite [inaudible] or something, yeah.

RM:

Nowadays, they'll have their DVDs and all that stuff and iPods, iPads, and all of that, but back then, they might have a VCR, maybe. Even before that, no VCR, so the program was meant to bring them a touch of home.

AW:

So you could have a show that outnumbered the audience. [laughter]

RM:

Oh yes. I went with Loretta—

AW:

I've played some gigs where I outnumber the audience, but for different reasons. [laughter]

RM:

We went with Loretta Lynn. I was there. Her manager, her husband, fiddle player, guitar player, and we went to several places where there just three or four guys on a hilltop. We had a chopper that brought us in. This was in the Sinai desert.

AW:

Wow, that's amazing. So you, after two years, you transferred to the Adjutant General's Corps, but that didn't—was a long time before you got—

RM:

Yeah, it was a long time. I had to pay my dues.

AW:

What did you do in the Corps otherwise until you got your chance to—what kind of duties did you get?

RM:

I ran administrative services sections which encompassed cutting, typing, printing, and distributing orders. Distributing electronic messages, liaison with the defense, printing—print shop that was on base. Anything that had to do with pushing paper. Ran the postal unit. I was actually commander of a small postal unit in Fort Sill for a little while. The army did have—I'm not sure whether they do anymore—had an extensive postal system sanctioned by the U.S. postal service. All of the people that worked in that had to meet all the same requirements as a postal employee. One of my first jobs at Fort Sill was investigating embezzlement from a postal unit. We had sent a clerk up to Fort Chaffee for summer camp to have him run a postal unit there and it was what's called a finance unit because he sold stamps and money orders. Well, he tapped a tilt, so I had to go up and interview people and then ultimately, we prosecuted him.

AW:

These assignments—obviously you moved around a lot. How frequent did you move in that?

RM:

We moved fourteen times in the first ten years, but not necessarily to different stations. We went from economy quarters to temporary quarters to regular quarters.

AW:

Maybe all at the same base.

RM:

In Germany.

DM:

Yeah, that was in Germany.

AW:

So that's three moves, but you're still at—

RM:

Right. It's kind of misleading—

DM:

And then, he had the branch transfer and we moved to Stuttgart, so that was a fourth move in the three years we were in Germany the first time. Before Germany was a short officer's basic course and then he came back to Fort Sill briefly.

RM:

Well, no. I graduated. We moved from Lubbock to Lawton, Oklahoma. Rented a house there for how many weeks? Three months, ninety days. I don't remember. Six months.

DM:

It was six months. January to June.

RM:

And then, we packed up there and went to Germany. That's two moves right there.

DM:

And then from Germany though, we went back to Fort Sill and that was just that brief assignment. Then he went to Vietnam.

RM:

Yeah that was about eighteen months at Fort Sill then. From '66 to—well, it was about fourteen months.

DM:

So he was—our second daughter was born at Fort Sill. The first one was born in Germany. Then Vietnam and then he came back. I was in Phoenix, and next it was the officer's advanced course. So it's—I mean, these weren't just going to a post to have an assignment. Already, two classes. Vietnam, he went to war, he went to school twice, then we went to Fort Ord and that was a regular assignment, and then the army sent him to his master's so it was school again. By the time the dust settled after all these moves, and they kept promoting him, and every time there's a school—

RM:

Promotion during Vietnam—promotions came quickly. They're a requirement for the officer corps.

DM:

So he made major in Fort Ord in 1969. He had been in the army six years and he was already a major.

AW:

Yeah, that's pretty quick.

DM:

But every time they promoted him or sent him to a school, he owed the army two more years.

AW:

And this wasn't a brevet commission. This was a standard.

RM:

Well, basically I was a reserve officer. You come out of ROTC and unless you're a distinguished military graduate, you have a reserve commission. Very early on, I guess while I was in Vietnam, I applied—no, maybe Fort Sill before I went to Vietnam—applied and was integrated into the regular army. I became head of the regular army commission which I technically still have. You never—[laughter]

DM:

But we had never ever intended to have an army career. That was something that he had to do and get over with, so we can go back to grad school and get on with our lives, but by the time he paid back all this time he owed for stuff, and we had two little kids and he'd been in ten years. We said, my gosh, it's only ten more until you can retire.

RM:

My parents were overjoyed when I stayed in. They had, I'm sure, apoplexy when I told them I was changing my major to theater.

DM:

But our ideas of going back to grad school as a young childless couple changed a great deal when we two small children, and ten more years, we can have retirement, so anyway, we stayed. The moves slowed down after that. We only two more moves after that in the next fifteen years.

RM:

At twenty-two years, I'd been in Washington for seven years. I had an assignment in the basement of the Pentagon as the administrative officer to the army's largest computer agency. That was an experience all in itself.

AW:

I can only imagine.

RM:

The Pentagon is everything you've ever heard about.

AW:

Plus, you were working, and that was probably a big main frame.

RM:

Two big main frames.

DM:

The size of this house.

RM:

I like to say we bragged because we had ten megabytes of core story. I have more in my phone.

AW:

I know it. When I took my first computer class at Tech, the Burroughs computer in the computer building took up the whole first floor. It had 5-12-K. [laughter] Ballpoint pens have more than that.

RM:

I did three years in the basement of the Pentagon, and because of contacts I had made, there was a gentleman over—Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel. By that time, he was full Colonel—another Adjutant General Corps officer that was in charge of the entertainment program and the armed forces entertainment office was under him, and the guy that had been there for longer than he should've been, an air force officer, he'd been there for about ten years. That's unheard of. He was—they were moving him, and I don't know. Somehow, he thought of me.

DM:

No, you went to him and said, "I want that job."

RM:

Well, but he's the one that told me that—Nelson Wood told me that it's available. Okay, so I started—took him resumes and everything else, and I got the job and I had that for three years. I really wanted to stay longer. Well, the people that run the assignment said, "Wait a minute. You haven't been overseas to a long tour in twenty years. Oh, you've got to keep up with your peers." I said, "I don't want to keep up with my peers. I want this job, and everybody admits I'm the best person in the army for it." Well, here's your choice, you can go to Germany or retire which I could at the time. Well, I got two kids in college. Wrong. We bit the bullet.

AW:

And went back to Germany.

RM:

Went back to Germany and had what we considered a three-year vacation. We traveled extensively in the Austin-Healey.

DM:

Bought all these oriental rugs.

AW:

That explains how you could have two children in college and an Austin-Healey.

DM:

I was working, and we were empty nesters. so I said, "I'm not going to sit at home in an apartment for three years.

AW:

When you would go to these different assignments, it's one thing for Rick because he's here's what I have to do. You're having to reinvent yourself each time.

DM:

Exactly.

AW:

Did you develop a process for doing that? How did you go about it?

DM:

Well, in Germany that last time, the only place to work is there for the army, so I actually went to work in the library first just as a library tech. That was my first job at Texas Tech. I had helped in the library in schools, so went I went to Tech, I went to the library, and said do you

hire students? I don't think I even went through any kind of placement. I just went and said here I am and so I got hired. Based on that experience from thirty years earlier, they hired me at the library at the post where he was working. We started volunteering. We took a year off from theater. We said we don't want to—if we're going to travel around, we don't want to be tied down with rehearsals and stuff. Then after that year, we went to the theater. By then, we had seen some of the shows and actually, he was still in charge of that area for southern Germany so he was about ten steps above, but ultimately, those people in the theater and the local recreation area kind of were in his area of oversight. He knew the people and we had seen the shows and we went and started volunteering, and then the entertainment director managed to finagle some money to hire me to be the director. I was the theater director in Stuttgart for the last year we were there. The artistic director.

RM:

We considered staying in Germany. I think Diane made reference to it yesterday.

AW:

You mean just moving there permanently?

DM:

Well, just staying there once he retired because then he would become my dependent because I had the fulltime job.

AW:

Oh, I see. He would retire. You'd keep your job.

DM:

Yeah, but at that point, our parents were elderly, and we decided it's easier to travel there and live here.

AW:

What years would this be? When you were in Stuttgart?

DM:

That was eighty—

RM:

'85 through '88.

DM:

So we decided we'd better come back home.

RM:

At that point in time, I was one of the most singular lieutenant colonels in the army.

AW:

You were a light colonel?

RM:

Yes. I had been passed over for a full colonel several times, and although legally you could be passed over any number of times, they decided that were going to institute a new policy that after so many, it was goodbye. By law, I could've stayed for twenty-eight years. Twenty-eight? Yes. Unless I made full colonel, I couldn't stay for thirty, but I could stay for twenty-eight, but it wasn't fun anymore. All these right-winged zealots that I had to work for were not fun anymore, and we said okay, here's our resumes. We subscribed to Art Search.

DM:

It was before email. We had to send physical resumes overseas and we had requirements. We needed to be close to Texas. We wanted to be in Texas or close. We were going home because of our parents, all of whom were in north Texas.

RM:

We said, okay, whoever gets a job first, that's where we go, and that was me. That was kind of obtuse because I hadn't heard anything, hadn't heard anything. I called Baton Rouge, and they said, "Oh, are you still available?" Yes. "Oh, just a minute—we'll call you back." And they called back and said, "You're hired." What had happened, they had hired somebody, and he got there, stepped off the plane, and looked around and said, "Oh no," and got back on. [laughter] It was kind of happenstance. The next day, she gets an offer from the community theater in Lawton, Oklahoma.

DM:

Baton Rouge was fun.

RM:

Yeah, Baton Rouge was fun.

AW:

Baton Rouge, as we talked of it yesterday, I think of it fondly because I didn't live there. I just visited there and that may make a difference, but I really like the place. Before—

RM:

Let me—I've got one more final thought about the army entertainment system in Germany

particularly. It was so big they had depot at Aschaffenburg that did nothing but provide costumes, props, scenery, and support to the program.

AW:

That is big. You were talking about the right-winged zealots that weren't fun anymore to work for. It strikes me is that there is a bit of a sort of a natural tension between being in the theater and being in the military. Was that a factor throughout your career being known as the theater geek?

RM:

No. We managed to pull a lot of my bosses in, and some places, they actually worked with us in the theater. Most of the time, they'd come see the shows. Most cases I was working—well, no, not always—I was working with other AG officers, so they understood. They were of like mind, but that last assignment, I'm working for a little lieutenant colonel whose on the list for full colonel who is an armor officer. The colonel that was there when I first came in, he was infantry, artillery, or something. He was a mad German. Oh, god. Anyway, I never had any real problem.

AW:

I just wondered if that was a—

RM:

I had problems like, oh god, I've got to hang the lighting for this show. How can I get off? [laughter] When I was in Washington, it was really easy.

AW:

When you were in Vietnam, what was your assignment there? What did you do?

RM:

I ran a shift in the MACV, Military Assistance Command Vietnam, electronic message center. We handled something like fifty-thousand electronic messages a month.

AW:

So you were in Saigon?

RM:

Tan Son Nhut, the airbase outside of Saigon. I was there for the majority of my tour, but for about six weeks, I was transferred up to Phu bai.

AW:

Spell Phu bai.

RM:

Kason.

AW:

Okay, Khe Sanh I know. So that's Phu bai?

RM:

Yes.

AW:

And how do you spell Phu bai?

RM:

P-h-u-b-a-i.

AW:

P-h-u-b-a-i.

RM:

To do basically the same thing—well I was up there to supervise all of the administration. At some point, they took parts of a lot of units and made a new corps. It was a twenty-fourth corps provisional it was called, I think. It was headquartered there in Phu bai, and they needed administration so they raped everybody else in Saigon for a man here, a man there, and put together the section, and I got tabbed.

AW:

What was it—I mean, one of the great things to me about the army, and I was a policeman during this time. I got drafted was 4-Fed because I was allergic to tetanus shots, so I was never in the military, but being in police work, I understood chain of command and all those kinds of quasi military things that we went through.

DM:

That's a uniform service.

AW:

Yeah, and you dealt with violence and you were in harm's way all too frequently—more than you wished. One of things that was always important to us and I know in the army, one of the things that I always admired about the army and the marines in particular were the sense of

Esprit de corps for a—you're part of the Big Red One or you're a part of—so what was it like going to an invented corps?

RM:

We were all there together and what made it even more togetherness was almost every night, the sirens would go off and we'd have to leave our bunks and go to bunkers because there was a rocket attack nearby, and at some point, I said I don't like this. I convinced the boss down in Saigon, I said, "I'm a senior caption." I think maybe by that time I was on the list for major. I don't know. "I'm a senior caption. You've got some junior captains down there that really need this experience." I got him to switch.

AW:

This is your theater training to allow you to—[laughter]

RM:

I go back to Saigon. Shortly thereafter, the bunker that everybody went to took a direct hit. I don't remember how many if any were killed, but certainly were injured.

AW:

There but for the grace of God. Just as aside, and I'll explain when we have lunch today my interest in this question, but did you ever spend any time in Vung Tau?

RM:

No.

AW:

Just curious.

RM:

No, I went from message center to BOQ.

AW:

And when you did R&R you went—

RM:

We went to—well, I met her Hawaii, but I also took another R&R to Singapore.

AW:

Australia was another place that people went.

RM:

Australia, Kuala Lumpur.

AW:

Oh really? Yeah, that's pretty exotic.

RM:

There's at least one other. I can't remember. There was another Indonesian location. I can't remember what it was. Singapore was interesting. One of the most fascinating.

AW:

I'll bet. Especially in the sixties and seventies.

RM:

The places I went—Tiger Balm Gardens—they still exist.

AW:

B-a-l-m, Balm?

RM:

Balm. Have you heard of Tiger Balm?

AW:

Yeah.

RM:

Okay. The family that founded that SAV [?] made billions of dollars and both in Singapore and I think Hong Kong, they're called Haw Par Gardens. Tiger Balm Gardens and they are beautiful gardens of flowers and everything else, but they are also these gory, gory displays of people killing other people. You remember the one we went to in Thailand that had all that stuff?

DM:

Yeah, but that wasn't in Tiger Balm.

RM:

No it wasn't. It was the same idea.

AW:

How bizarre.

RM:

There are dioramas and sculptures of gross acts.

AW:

How odd.

RM:

It's apparently part of the culture.

AW:

Before we leave Vietnam, of course we all know what was going on in the United States with regard to entities, and also, the people I've spoken with who were in Vietnam, particularly the astute observer types which I would certainly believe you fit into that group, but one of the things that they always mention to me was the revolving door nature of service over there and how difficult it was to not just win a war, but to even just conduct business when you had people moving that quickly.

RM:

Every twelve to thirteen months.

AW: Did that affect the—I don't want to just use the term bureaucratic work, but the service work that you were doing, did you have that same kind of issue?

RM:

There's a learning curve. Somebody new comes in, I had thirteen or fourteen enlisted men under me. My chief NCO was a navy chief petty officer. It was a joint army air force and navy in activity. There's always a learning curve. New guy comes in and sometimes we had overlap and that would allow you to train the person before you left or their counterpart left. I always thought that the revolving door business is what kept us there so long.

AW:

Yeah it seems to be universal with the people I talk to.

RM:

And the lack of support back home.

AW:

So your first assignment out of Vietnam was? Remind me.

RM:

The career course at Fort Benjamin Harrison. Officer advanced course.

AW:

So you get back from Vietnam and what is it like for both of you coming back? Although you've not been in Vietnam, but still here, you're part of Vietnam experience military and here's all this—

RM:

Well, I don't think I put on my uniform until I got on the base.

AW:

Okay, that answers the question.

RM:

I flew back into Travis Air Force Base, we came down to San Francisco, and we did things in San Francisco and then we went to Disneyland. Now, you didn't see anybody running around in uniform. You'd get spit on. I can remember after the advanced course, I went to Fort Ord, and my second part of my assignment at Ford Ord was the chief of trainee personnel, and this was at the point in time where people from Berkley were marching on Fort Ord to try to steal the trainee records so that they couldn't send them to Vietnam. Angela Davis was one of the leaders.

AW:

And I think Joan Baez went on that march if I remember my history.

RM:

Yes and we got called in several times in the evening to guard our records facility, but guard? We had no weapons. [laughter] My NCIC coached the softball team. We had baseball bats. I'll never forget that.

AW:

So back to the Stone Age armed forces—[laughter]

RM:

That's right.

DM:

And we lived on post at Fort Ord up on the hill with a view of Monterrey Bay; that was the most beautiful location ever.

AW:

Yeah, I—well, again we'll talk about it at lunch, but I'm interested a little more in Fort Ord too. You were there right after the big meningitis outbreak. Right? That didn't happen while you were in Fort Ord the first?

RM:

I think so. That doesn't ring a bell.

AW:

I know that was one of the things that they had that was a real significant issue there for a while, and it was during the Vietnam War because they were putting a lot of people through.

DM:

It must have been in the enlisted ranks and the barracks or something.

RM:

Yeah and the trainees.

AW:

Yeah, no, it was. It was the trainees, but meningitis is so communicable that I think the whole base was, it was a big—

DM:

I don't think that happened while we were there because I don't remember.

RM:

Her brother was drafted and went through basic, and did he even go through advanced? I guess out there at Fort Ord.

DM:

He had a degree in geology from Northern Arizona University.

RM:

And I engineered in getting him a, what we call an SAE assignment, Scientific and Engineering. Instead of going to Vietnam, he went to Vicksburg, Mississippi, with the water waves experimentation station that corps of engineers.

DM:

He was the only son of an only son. It was really, really important to—well, personally, you don't want to see your son killed, but also, you know, the only son of an only son of two. I mean, we have a very small family, and now he has a son and our cousin in Kerrville has a son. They're both named David. David Benham. So the two, only two.

RM:

Yeah, I'm friends with both of them on Facebook and I have to look at the picture on the post to see which one it is.

DM:

See which one we're talking about.

RM:

One is a naval officer. Either commander or lieutenant commander. The other one is—

DM:

A hippie.

RM:

Aging hippie. [laughter] That's her nephew.

AW:

Oh, the nephew not the—

RM:

Well they're both—no they're not.

DM:

No, the other David is a cousin. I guess third cousin or something.

AW:

What did you take away from those years in the military that have carried on?

RM:

Organization. I felt very confident in managing people and projects. It served me well at Baton Rouge and planning scenery construction and timeline from start to opening.

DM:

And allocating the volunteer assignments. Time management and all that.

RM:

Yeah, working with volunteers and managing the volunteers and managing money. I guess, I don't remember what our budget was at the Pentagon, but entertainment, I had two or three million dollar budget every year. That covered not only my travel, and I had two other officers working for me. Air Force officer and a naval officer and we split the country up. I had the Midwest, one had the East Coast, one had the West Coast. We got applications from what we call non-celebrity units—garage bands, holiday inn, bar bands, and all kinds from every genre you can think of and we'd go audition them. Fly to where they were, they'd give us their schedule, and we'd say we're going to be there at such and such time. Set aside a table for us or something if it was a bar or whatever.

AW:

That sounds like a great gig.

DM:

Yeah, it was a wonderful job.

RM:

I would plan. Maybe leave on Monday or Tuesday and be back by the weekend and hit maybe three different locations and fly from one to the other or drive if it was—I remember a lot of times I would fly into Minneapolis and drive to Eau Claire and [inaudible] and some other places around there because there were a lot of bands in that area that we worked with. We'd select them and then they basically were volunteers. We paid their airfare, their lodging, and no, we paid their airfare and we gave them a per diem. They had an excess baggage allowance for their equipment, and they could take a week or ten days in the middle of their tour. They would go for three and four weeks. They could take a week or ten days in the middle as vacation, but then, they're on their own. They have to be back at a point in time.

AW:

So you weren't supporting them during that vacation time.

RM:

No.

DM:

But they were over there, wherever there was. Every so often, they had to go with one of these non-celebrity groups just to check out the route and so forth. I got to go with him one time with a

blue grass band from Indiana to Germany and that was so much fun. They were what—four and we were two and on a big bus. [laughter]

RM:

In Europe particularly, each group was given a tour bus with a driver, and there's an overall coordinator for Europe—Germany. And then, there's an entertainment director or somebody at each location to coordinate with them and usually made their reservations and that sort of thing.

AW:

What a terrific way to tour as a musician.

RM:

A lot of people loved it.

AW:

Oh, I'd think.

RM:

I don't know whether the program exists anymore or not. I don't recall.

AW:

I think I would have a musician pal who was doing somewhere if it was still going on. The only thing I know that's similar, Bob Livingston, good friend of mine that played with Jerry Jeff, and Willie, and he started the Lost Gonzo old band with Gary P., and all that bunch. Bob traveled for probably ten years on and off with the state department as a musical ambassador and they did a similar thing. He'd show up and they would have people there who would make arrangements and he really, really enjoyed that program for as long as he was in it, and I think most of his, though it wasn't connected to military, they would have an emissary in the Middle East, in a country in the Middle East. That sort of thing, but it sounded like it was the same kind of administrative arrangement that you're talking about.

RM:

Yes. I recall that program. I don't think I ever worked with anybody. Some other groups we sent out had done it at one time or another. And then, the celebrity groups were all booked and arranged by the USO.

AW:

And through their agents and that sort of thing, right?

RM:

Yes.

AW:

And so when you were working with these non-celebrity groups, they really—

RM:

I worked with agents.

AW:

Oh, you did work with agents?

RM:

Yes, I worked with agents.

AW:

Okay, I wonder if they even—

RM:

Probably fifty, sixty percent of them had agents of varying degrees of quality. [laughter]

DM:

Your brother in law.

AW:

That pretty well describes agents generally.

RM:

Yeah, but the celebrity groups, the USO, took care of—booked and they—we paid a per diem, took care of all the transportation and administration and we paid a Diem and the USO kicked in because we were paying I think the non-celebrity entertainment or something like fifty dollars a day. They had to eat and lodge out of that. We could get them small, pincy owned type things for ten, twelve bucks a night. In Germany, that was luxurious in many cases. The celebrities wanted more so we usually would tell them a hundred dollars a day per diem. Sometimes they wouldn't take it. They would give it back and for the most part, they were all—the USO had one employee that that was his job, and if I'm not mistaken, he is now the director for Jeopardy. He directs the show. Name is Kevin McCarthy. Popular name.

AW:

Yeah, I was going to say that.

RM:

Anyway, celebrities, some of them were just wonderful to work with. Some of them were pains in the ass. I don't mind saying so.

AW:

I'm sure that's true. Well, quite interesting. In some ways, you were never very far from show business.

RM:

No.

AW:

The two words.

RM:

Even in the last assignment in Germany, I was a deputy for community affairs. Now, what that meant was under. We had staff supervision. We didn't have control or chain of command. We had staff supervision over sports, recreation centers, libraries, entertainment. That all? Yes, that's all.

AW:

So by staff supervision, that was essentially more of a coordinating job?

RM:

Yes and I—

AW:

So you'd hire and fire?

RM:

Youth activities. I had a person on my staff that was an expert in each of those areas and they would work with—the region, seventh corps, was divided into military communities. Herzberg, Heidelberg, blah, blah, blah. Well, not Heidelberg, but each was called a military community. Had a commander, the mayor, for all practical purposes and then they had their staff and all those areas. Plus logistics and everything else which we didn't mess with, and my staff would help them with problems, monitor their progress. One of the hot things was profitability. Somebody got in his mind that the programs have to be profitable. They have to make a profit. Well, excuse me. The theater program is never going to make a profit.

AW:

I was going to say they weren't familiar with theater in the real world.

RM:

Libraries. How is a library going to make a profit?

DM:

They were free. We didn't charge anything.

AW:

Yeah, it's like a highway that makes a profit. That's not their job.

RM:

That was my first exposure to spreadsheets, and I got pretty good with those spreadsheets. It was using Lotus way back. Remember Lotus?

AW:

Well I was in financial services for about ten years, so I was a spreadsheet geek. I actually wrote my own programs for Lotus because there were things in those days that you couldn't get an automatic function for everything. One was a thing called internal rate of return for which there's no algebraic formula. It's an intertitle thing you increase by the rate and decrease by the same rate to see where they meet and that's the internal rate of return, and so it's iterative, you know? A spreadsheet was just fine. You could write this thing with chug, chug, and chug. It would create—it would come back with a real world number that showed the internal rate of return of the investment. I had to learn to do that on those spreadsheets, so it was really kind of fun in that era. That would have been what year that you were doing Lotus? Mid-eighties or eighties?

DM:

Mid-eighties.

RM:

Somewhere '85 through '88 because I know at some point, I bought my first PC in '87. Maybe '86, anyway, it was a Compact. Not a compact, a Kaypro.

AW:

Oh, Kaypro. Mine was a Compact. A portable. It weighed forty-five—[laughter]

RM:

Kaypros started with portables, but this was a desktop.

AW:

Green screen?

RM:

Green screen, but I guess I had, I guess it was Lotus I had on it, and I would bring home the files from the office and get those, and I could work with them at home. I've got to make a pit stop.

AW:

Yeah, I will have to also. Let's have a little pause here then. I'll put this on hold for a moment.

Pause in Recording

AW:

Well, now we're back. I think before we start on Baton Rouge and move forward with all that, can we take a little time and have the two of you talk about your daughters?

RM:

Sure. We'll start with the first, oldest.

AW:

That would be perfect.

RM:

Erin Kathleen Malone.

AW:

E-r-i-n?

RM:

E-r-i-n.

AW:

And K?

RM:

K. Born August 8, 1963. My birthday is August 9.

AW:

And she was born in Germany.

RM:

In Germany. 97th General Hospital. Frankfurt, Germany. That apparently was a great experience for my wife. [laughter]

DM:

It was horrible.

AW:

Are we just talking about birth generally or that hospital?

DM:

No, that hospital.

AW:

Really?

RM:

German nurses apparently.

DM:

It's an old German hospital in a square built around a courtyard with cobblestones and the labor room was on the inner courtyard, so overlooking a rainy night on cobblestones with old jeeps in the garbage, and you know, all the support service stuff on the inner courtyard. It was just ugly and German and dreary. About one o'clock in the morning, I was introduced to the obstetrician who had just arrived from the states jetlagged, who was to deliver my baby within the hour. He was being shown around the hospital.

AW:

Shouldn't he get some sleep?

DM:

This is the labor room. Here's the—he truly had just arrived. They were showing him around the hospital. I did have German nurses who spoke no English. We had been in the country for two months or something. I didn't know any German yet. I'd gotten very little prenatal information.

RM:

You'd been going down there once a week or once a month or once every two weeks or something. Talk about a cattle call. Every pregnant woman in central Germany reported to this hospital on the same day of the week, and they weighed us in a central location and called out the number to somebody who was taking it down. Of course, I started out bigger than most of these

little five-foot tall, hundred pound girls. I started out weighing more than they did when they were nine months pregnant. It was so embarrassing to hear these big numbers, and I gained forty pounds too. I'd go into the examination room, the doctor would press my stomach. How do you feel? Fine. Okay, see you next week or month or whatever is was.

RM:

We were living north of Frankfurt in a little town called Nieder-Mörlen which is a suburb of Bad Nauheim. Bad Nauheim was Roosevelt's favorite spa, and it survived the war. It was never bombed because it was Roosevelt's favorite spa.

DM:

He directed that it not be bombed.

RM:

Anyways, she went into labor and so we hopped in the car. This was maybe morning or somewhere.

DM:

Well, you've forgotten part of it.

RM:

What?

DM:

Our hold baggage arrived that morning. I went into labor, the hold baggage arrived and we had to have them unpack it first before I could go to the hospital to make sure it was all there.

[laughter]

RM:

How quickly we forget. In the military, you had household goods and you had hold baggage and that harkens back to the time when stuff was sent by ship. I'm sure now it's all airfreight. Maybe a ship or container or something like that. You put some in your hold baggage that you just had to have quickly once you got there and maybe it got there. Anyway, so we unpacked and we hopped in a car and I took her to Frankfurt, checked her in. I came back.

DM:

Well, you forgot another step. We went to the PX first and bought a movie camera so we could take pictures of the new baby.

AW:

That's important especially to send back home.

RM:

I came back to _____ [?] [1:08:04]. I actually went to a movie that night. I saw a German version of "The Threepenny Opera" with Sammy Davis Junior.

DM:

So this was way before men participated in the birth process.

AW:

In fact, as I recall with our first child, and this was 1974, they just discouraged you from coming, and this was in Denver. It was like, you know, here's where you can stay.

DM:

I talk to young women now, and man, they don't even go to the hospital. They have at home in the bathtub with their husband and their labor coach and the midwife and the candles and the music.

RM:

We just had a rental in the classic theater of a show called "Birth." It's all about birthing of various sorts and kinds. It's generally presented by the midwife association in the town where it's being presented. It's a national thing. This was the second or third year that they've done it here. It was interesting.

DM:

So back in my day, the husband went home, and once I went into the delivery room, give me a shot, wake me when it's over. That's the way it was.

RM:

Erin was a pretty good sized baby. Eight pounds, nine ounces.

AW:

That's about the same size our first was. Eight pounds, ten ounces. We were, as I said, in Denver and at St. Joseph's Hospital. He was born in C-section and so they put him—their policy was put him in an incubator. Well his head was at one end and his feet were bumping the other end.

DM:

[Laughter] It was too big. I think it's wonderful to have a baby that big because it's like—

AW:

They can almost walk and talk.

DM:

Right, like having one who is already two weeks or two months old. Some of them don't get that way until they're two months and she was filled out and a pretty baby.

RM:

She had an average military brat childhood and started school at Fort Ord. Right?

AW:

When you're over there and you're a long way from home and—

DM:

And so no mother there or sisters or aunties or anything.

AW:

Yeah any of that sort of thing, so was there something that you did to fill in for that or just go in on your own?

DM:

As it happened, all of the young lieutenants who arrived at that unit at the same time either had pregnant wives or the one wife who wasn't pregnant got pregnant real quick to fit in with the rest of us, and we just were each other's support system.

RM:

We had neighbors. This was when we were on the economy, German economy. We had neighbors right over living in another apartment that we ended up watching kids back and forth. We watched their kids, they go on vacation, or vice versa.

DM:

They were another couple from Texas.

RM:

They were military. They were from Texas.

DM:

And their son was just a little, few months older than Erin, so once we knew how to take care of a baby, we could take care of two as easily as one.

RM:

Well there was actually—I hadn't thought about this in a long time—Moerbes. They were there. Weren't they?

DM:

Were they?

RM:

Yeah. This was the other officer from Tech.

AW:

How do you spell Moerbe?

RM:

M-o-e-r-b-e.

DM:

But he's the one in particular I was talking about with all the difference between time and service because he waited—they were commissioned.

RM:

He joined the National Guard, so he had more pay than I did because he had been in the National Guard.

DM:

Because he had that, but they were commissioned at the same time, but I think he missed the promotions because he didn't—after graduating, he didn't come on active duty until June.

RM:

I don't remember.

DM:

So he missed the promotion.

RM:

He'd been an enlisted person in the guard, but that's beside. Erin—

DM:

Erin actually started kindergarten in Phoenix.

RM:

Oh, she did.

DM:

Then we moved to Indianapolis and she continued Kindergarten in Indianapolis, and then we moved to Fort Ord, and so she started school in Fort Ord, but she'd already had a year of school essentially, so she was in a combined first and second grade. The schools on post were small. She was in the combined first and second, so then when we moved to Texas, she had—to Lubbock, she had a brand new teacher whose idea of teaching was everybody was going to do the same thing all at the same time, and you'd get through at the same time and then we—well Erin was and is very bright, and she had already kind of been through the second grade, and she got in trouble because she was bored. She could finish so we put her in Montessori school at the Episcopal Church which was called something. Saint George or something. Saint Christopher.

RM:

I don't know. Schulz's son went there.

AW:

Wasn't All Saints was it?

DM:

May have been All Saints Episcopal, but it had a Montessori school.

AW:

It was a school. Yeah, they had a Montessori and then, now they even have high school and such.

RM:

She thrived there.

DM:

Yeah, that was wonderful. I'm just sorry we didn't go there immediately.

RM:

Then we went to Indianapolis and she went into the gifted and talented school.

DM:

Yeah, they had advanced placement from then on.

RM:

And that was what? About fifth grade. By the time of fourth or fifth grade, she said, "I want to be a graphic artist." So she is.

AW:

Wow, that's early to decide.

RM:

Although she has gone far beyond graphic art. She's now doing that as an adjunct to her main business in internet. Internet user experience design.

AW:

And she lives in San Francisco.

DM:

Yes, she does. She lives in San Francisco.

RM:

Oh, yes. Erin lives in San Francisco.

DM:

She got her bachelor's—she stayed home with us in Washington after she graduated from high school and went to local community college because in the D.C. area, a lot of the adjunct faculty at the community college were working professionals in the area, so she was able to study with some really good artists there, and then she went to East Carolina. She did her research. She decided she wanted—well first, she almost got a scholarship to the School of Visual Arts in New York and then we decided, well even if she didn't get the scholarship, she could go there. We missed buying an apartment for her in Manhattan just by two minutes. The people right in front of us had their checkbook out before we could've gotten it. Somewhere in there she decided, you know, I want the university experience. She had spent a summer in New York at Parsons. She was familiar with Manhattan, and it wasn't that. She decided she wanted the full university experience so she did her research and found out what was an accredited art school close by and so she went to East Carolina and got her degree there. She got good training there. She did jewelry and ceramics and drawing and painting and you know, she just did it all.

RM:

And had not a great deal of trouble getting a job out of school.

DM:

Right.

AW:

Yeah, I think that's sort of been a longtime hotspot for especially folk arts and so that would be great training.

DM:

She had—she kind of topped out salary wise working for an ad agency in the D.C. area and she saw that she would have to do something different so she went to RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology) in Rochester for her Master's, for MFA (a Master's of Fine Art).

RM:

That's where she discovered computers. Well, she discovered her knack for computers. When she graduated from East Carolina, her graduation present was an Omega computer.

DM:

But at RIT, they got Adobe Photoshop when she was there.

AW:

And back in the days when it would be easier to be brain surgeon than to run Adobe as I remember correctly.

DM:

She took to it like that.

RM:

By the next year, she was teaching it.

DM:

By the next year, she was teaching it. RIT doesn't use part-time faculty, but she was the only one who knew how to use it so she was teaching it and her graduate thesis was some very complicated—

RM:

Interactive.

DM:

Interactive pro—design. I mean, other people's graduate thesis was a beautifully crafted bow and she had this complete interactive website.

RM:

It was a computer that you'd click on the hyperlink and it takes you there.

AW:

And so what was this? About the mid-eighties when she was? No, no. She had been in the ad agency.

RM:

She graduated in '92 or '93.

DM:

Something like that.

RM:

After she graduated, she worked there for about two years. Worked for Kodak and then headed for California in '95 and hasn't looked back.

DM:

So she graduated in '92 or '93, I guess.

RM:

She moved to California. She worked for Adobe. She worked for something called Zip Two which was merged with Alta Vista under the aegis of a man called Elon Musk.

DM:

She was his first production designer.

AW:

Really?

RM:

Then she went to work for Microsoft and that didn't last long. She hated it. And then to Yahoo. She was at Yahoo five years. First female director, and then she and two other people she had met at Yahoo were elsewhere, formed their own company.

DM:

And they all know each other out there, the ones who were in the design.

AW:

What's the name of the name of the company?

RM:

Tangible UX. Standing for User Experience.

AW:

Cool and that's still the company she's --?

RM:

Yes.

AW:

And so that's been some time. Right?

RM:

Yeah. How many years?

DM:

Well, it's the same age as classic so eight years.

AW:

That's pretty remarkable in that industry to found a company.

RM:

They've gone from working exclusively out of their home office to now they have offices in a building with—they have one fulltime. Don't they?

DM:

Their staff fluctuates depending on how busy they are. They just pitched to who in San Francisco, Wednesday? That she's hoping will be a new client. Not Wednesday, Monday.

RM:

Capital One.

DM:

Yeah, Capital One. Their clients have been Intuit and Nokia.

RM:

Did they get Verizon? I think they even had an account with Verizon also.

DM:

I don't know, but it's, you know, big companies, and they help them with their internal stuff.

AW:

Cool, cool. All right, so that's one daughter.

RM:

That's Erin.

DM:

And she's single and living in San Francisco, in the city, doing exactly what she always said she wanted to do—be rich and have lovers and never marry. She hasn't had that many lovers, but she has a steady boyfriend now who is very nice.

RM:

Who is a percussionist, a Latin percussionist.

DM:

And a lawyer.

AW:

You were mentioning him yesterday when we were having lunch.

RM:

He just bought his first real drum kit, and he's like a kid with a new toy. He had to drive somewhere to pick it up, brought it home, put it together, and says, "No, we're not going out tonight. I'm going to practice my drums." He's taking lessons, and he's discovered that—and I didn't know this—there is a service online for maybe not be just drummers, maybe other musicians—lessons. Interactive lessons and at some point, you record what you're doing and send it to them and you get professional criticism, but it's totally interactive. You pay a monthly fee for it. Wish they'd had that back in the day.

DM:

I put in that comment about she's rich and successful and living in the city because Sheila, our other daughter, has all the same skills in art and Photoshop and she teaches Photoshop and stuff, but she's always worked with nonprofits and little art galleries and little funky theaters, and then, the last four years she was at UCLA getting her PhD and working part time here and an adjunct job there and one online course here, cobbling together maybe almost enough to live on. I mean, Erin kept saying—Sheila went out to California to get her master's at San Jose State and lived with Erin when Erin was living San Jose working at Yahoo and wherever she was working—and

Erin kept saying, “Sheila, come into my business. You can work anywhere you want to in Silicon Valley,” because she has the skills and Sheila’s, “Oh, no. That would be prostituting myself.” [laughter]

RM:

Sheila’s the visionary.

DM:

She’s an artiste.

RM:

She went through the usual—grade school, junior high, high school, and she went to—well, she came with us to Germany because she had gotten accepted to the American—

DM:

American University in Paris. We moved to Germany the day after she graduated from high school. Just, you know, say goodbye to your friends.

AW:

So what’s her birthday?

DM:

January 6, ’67.

AW:

Okay so there’s not a lot of difference between the two in age.

DM:

No. Three and a half years, but four years of school. They were never in the same school at the same time, you know.

AW:

That’s sometimes good. You don’t have to live up or live down or whatever.

DM:

Except it was a different—

RM:

Throughout high school, Sheila was knee deep in theater.

DM:

And music.

RM:

And music. There's not—she could pretty much play any instrument she picks up. We gave both the girls piano lessons. Sheila still has a keyboard and plays keyboard, but she plays—her principle instrument was flute, but she plays saxophone. She designed sound and music for production at the children's theater where she was working in Omaha that she was an interactive musician on the stage interacting with the actors and she had all of these open-end wrenches—box-end and open-end, hanging from trees, and each one's a different size, so each one's a different not and she would go through playing.

AW:

How cool. What a great design. I love it.

RM:

That was one of the most creative things I've ever seen. Anyway, that's Sheila.

AW:

That's terrific.

RM:

She came with us to Germany. Took her down and got her ensconced in an apartment in Paris and she made it through one semester and goes, what they don't tell you is the American College in Paris—college at that time in Paris, is the place that young ladies do their obligatory—what do you want to call it?

DM:

Year abroad. Is that what you're trying to say? I don't know. It's a party school and she, at that time, thought she wanted to major in international relations. She also picks up languages real easily too. She already spoke French.

RM:

In high school, she spent a summer in Sweden.

DM:

She picked up some Sweden and she just thought that's what she wanted to do. Well American College in Paris was not the place to do that, so she came back to Germany and lived with us the spring semester.

RM:

She took a couple of University of Maryland courses. Two during that semester and then she got accepted to Virginia Tech because she decided I'm going to go in theater. So she goes. Virginia Tech had a really strong theater department, and it was noted primarily for its theater management program, but she went and—

DM:

We, just before we left, had been very active, both of us, in the American Theater Association. Rick as the military—the Army Theater Association was one branch of the American Theater Association and so he would go to the conventions sort of representing that or part of it and then I was one of the founders of the small professional theater program of the association. They had higher education and secondary education and children's theater, Community Theater, and Army Theater. They didn't have a professional theater branch of it, and we had started a small professional theater in Indianapolis, and I was working with—very much like where we are now—I was working with small professional theaters in Washington. We were. We both were. Anyway, we just needed that, and what we needed for the small professional theaters—nobody starts a small professional theater without knowing how to do theater. It is theater artists who do that. What they don't know how to do is the management part, so for this program, for the conventions, I brought in management people and it turns out that the guys, and they were all men, at Virginia Tech, were sort of the best in the country for theater management and administration—all of the stuff that he'd been doing in the army, but applied to theater. So, I got to know those guys and so I told Sheila about that school, and I recommended it, and she got in. I can't remember their names now. I keep saying 'those guys' because I don't remember names, but I sent them an impassioned letter saying I'm sending my daughter to you, my baby, across the seas. Take care of her.

RM:

So she went to Virginia Tech, and she would come back to Germany. The military had a program that they would fly your dependent over and back once a year. You could either do it in the summer or at Christmas.

DM:

It wasn't twice a year? Because she came Christmas and summers.

RM:

I don't remember. It may have been twice a year. It was very generous. I know one year both girls came over and we went to Greece.

DM:

Because Erin was still at college. They both kind of did the five year plan.

RM:

Sheila would come back for the summers, and was it more than one summer she got a job with youth activities? She was shepherding kids as part of the youth programs. In fact—

DM:

She was working for the PX the last summer.

RM:

Anyway, we left her there. I retired, and we left her there. She came back later.

DM:

Because her contract went later than—

RM:

Yeah, she had a contract. We left. We had dispensed with all of our cars and were using a loaner from one of my employees, and he collected—people over there, many of them don't buy new cars. They'll pass them from one person to the next. Well, this was a 1972 Dodge Monaco. You know how big that sucker was. You drive it. You pull up to a stop sign in Germany and the Germans look at it and laugh. Well, I had borrowed that, and then Sheila took it for the rest of the time she was there and that was an adventure apparently. She came back and she graduated from Virginia Tech. You went for the graduation. I was busy with a show, I guess at Baton Rouge.

DM:

I don't remember why. We both went up for her senior play.

RM:

Yes, we did.

AW:

Well, better to go to the senior play than the graduation.

RM:

After graduation, she got an internship with Magic in Omaha?

DM:

Well, she toured for a year first.

RM:

Well, yeah, she toured with a women's collective doing some play about serpents and I mean, she's always been into snakes. At one point, we had grand snake. A bald python.

AW:

Oh, my gosh.

RM:

She toured for two or three months with this theater group. It was a women's production and probably espousing femininity and women's rights.

DM:

Not femininity. Feminism. There's a difference. [laughter]

RM:

Oh, is there?

DM:

Yeah. Feminism.

RM:

Okay, feminism. Anyway, and then she got an internship with Meg and Terri's Magic Theater in Omaha, and she went and did that, and from that, she got a fulltime job with, at that time, the Emmy Gifford Children's Theater as a sound designer, lighting designer, tech director, something.

AW:

Is that in Omaha?

RM:

In Omaha. After two or three years in that job, Warren Buffet's daughter bought the Rose Theater. The Plaster House.

DM:

That's right.

RM:

And Sheila got to speck all the equipment for it and it was given to children's theater and it became the Omaha Theatre for Young People and Sheila did the first season there before she got accepted to San Jose State and moved to California and lived with Erin.

DM:

She was in Omaha several years, and she and some of the folks who ended up also on the staff or the house cast, you know, the company cast from the children's theater started another theater. A little storefront. A small professional theater called The Blue Barn. They just had what their nineteenth anniversary or something and they have just been given a building.

AW:

That's a long time for a theater of that ilk. Twenty years is great.

DM:

Yeah, they don't do quite the same kind of outrageous stuff that they did when they first started. Everybody's twenty years older, those who are still with it. They were all in their twenties, and now they're all in their forties.

AW:

Right. It will change your outlook and your abilities. Some better some worse. She's in California still?

RM:

After she got her degree at San Jose State, she taught here and there and everywhere and finally got a fulltime job teaching theater, video, computers, and California history at a private K-eighth school in the San Jose area and she stayed there a long time and doing all these adjunct things also.

DM:

A long time and they loved her. They loved her at Old Orchard, and when I was out in San Francisco a few years ago with—I went to housesit for Erin and two of my girlfriends went with me, and we were out there about ten days. We drove down to San Jose to see Sheila's show with the fifth grade or seventh grade or whatever it was. It was so creative. It was fabulous. We laughed. We are still talking about it five years later. It was delightful and I could see why she's such a hit at this school. The kids adored her and the faculty and the parents too. She also stage managed a big annual musical somewhere.

AW:

Those are the two?

RM:

Sheila's the dark-haired one, although it's not dark anymore. It is salt and pepper.

AW:

So this would have been about how old?

RM:

How old is this picture?

DM:

Oh, it's old.

AW:

Yeah, I know. I'm thinking they're both of high school in this?

DM:

Yeah, they were. Let me see, Rick. Golly, I don't know when that was.

AW:

Well, both are beautiful young women.

DM:

Oh, thank you. I don't think of them as beautiful. I think of them as smart and accomplished.

Talented, they were both so talented.

AW:

You know, a lot of beauty has to do though with intelligence and talent. To me, that's different from them being pretty.

RM:

But anyway, Sheila did all of that and just came to the conclusion that she wasn't going to get a good university job without a PhD.

DM:

She got her MFA, and just at the same time that academia decided that MFA is no longer a terminal degree.

AW:

What a mistake.

DM:

She'd need a PhD too, and so she was just doing adjunct which is what I did all of my professional life. I couldn't go for where the jobs were because I had to go where he was and I

just took what was available, and so I know you can't—that's not a career. That's a series of jobs.

RM:

She got accepted to—well, she was actually accepted to Texas Tech and no—

AW:

I can pause it a minute.

DM:

Go ahead.

AW:

So she got an offer at UCLA.

DM:

A full ride.

AW:

Full ride?

RM:

Four years.

AW:

Can't beat that.

DM:

At a prestigious university in theater and performance theory, so she wasn't—the theater that she was doing during these past four years was separate from her school. She'd still had part time jobs and was teaching and designing—

RD:

And she wasn't supposed to.

DM:

—for some of the community colleges in the area and still teaching online courses, but she was doing scholarly study at UCLA. She had to get glasses for the first time in her life because she was reading so much.

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RM:

Two years ago, three years ago, Erin had a photo show in Astoria, Oregon, and we all went up there. She and Sheila drove up from California, and we flew out and met them there. Sheila's—

DM:

My brother and his family came from Washington. We all converged.

RM:

Sheila spent most of the time in her room reading. She comes in with a stack of books.

AW:

What a town to be in your hotel room reading. I played a gig at the Voodoo Lounge in Astoria one time. It was one of the most—I'll tell you about that at lunch. It was really fun.

RM:

Did you ride old three hundred?

AW:

No, I was there to attend, as part of my job at Texas Tech, a firing of an Onogama kiln by a native potter, and so we stayed across the river in Washington, but they were just outside of Astoria, and they'd arranged for me to play a gig and it was myself and a Comanche man named Harry Maslow from Lawton, Oklahoma, and the two of us did this show at the Voodoo Lounge at Astoria. I have these terrific memories of Astoria. What a great place.

DM:

[Laughter] I bet.

RM:

One of the signature things about Astoria is the old three hundred—the trolley car that goes from end of the town to the other.

AW:

No, we didn't get to do that, but we did get to eat razor clams. Man. That was a life changing experience for me.

DM:

What is that?

AW:

A razor clam. I don't know if you can get them [inaudible]. Surely you can somewhere, but I'd

never seen or heard of them, but when I got there, Barry Lopez is a scholar in residence at Texas Tech and we'd become pals and that's how all this happened so I said, "What do you eat? What's the best thing?" He says, "Well, you've got to have razor clams." And they go out in the morning and get these long skinny clams and they sauté them, and it's just incredible, so next time you're out there, look up a razor clam somewhere.

RM:

Yeah, I'll have to.

DM:

Yeah, I don't remember anybody talking about it.

RM:

Reason I ask about old three hundred is just last week, article in the San Antonio paper, whatever happened to old three hundred? Well, when they decommissioned the trolley cars here, they went various places and old three hundred had a life of its own. It went several places. It ended up in Astoria. It was refurbished and that's what goes up and down that track, but they didn't tell us it came from San Antonio as I recall.

AW:

Really? I do remember the tracks in Astoria. In fact, the Voodoo Lounge was—well, everything really kind of in Astoria is close to those tracks. It's sort of a skinny town. How interesting.

RM:

So Sheila graduated. We went out for her graduation.

DM:

This June.

RM:

In June and then she applied all over the place and finally—

DM:

Oh and now, so when she got her MFA, suddenly that was no longer a terminal degree, so in the spring, she became ABD officially with paperwork and suddenly, that's not hireable.

AW:

You got to have your dissertation.

DM:

You've got to have the paper in hand saying you have the PhD and I can understand that. I know people who have been ABD.

AW:

For twenty-five years.

DM:

They get hired somewhere, and then there's no time to finish a dissertation, so she finished her dissertation and got it in in time and graduated, but too late, really for so many jobs starting this school year, so at the last minute, she was hired at a college in San Bernardino County.

AW:

Which is why we were having the discussion yesterday.

DM:

Yeah, and so she was hired one day and started teaching the next. She's been playing catch up all semester just trying to stay one step ahead of the kids, but she loves it. It is good students and good faculty. She really likes it.

RM:

Well, that's good. It's a good salary too.

DM:

Oh my gosh. The community colleges in California pay more than the universities. They pay more than anybody.

AW:

Well they have—you know, there are lots and lots of things to like and dislike about California, and everybody has their things, but the community college system is remarkable. It's something to aspire to. We just don't treat our community colleges that way in Texas.

DM:

Well, we have a huge system here in San Antonio, and we have five in the consortium called Alamo Colleges and San Antonio College alone has almost twenty-five thousand students. It's amazing.

AW:

Yeah, Austin Community College is huge, but what I mean is in terms of the way they treat their faculty compared to the four year universities and the lack of pushing students. You know, in

California, it's really pretty much a given that you go to community college and then you go to university.

DM:

That's right. I had forgotten that. There was a time, and I don't know if that's still true, when the state universities wouldn't let in freshman. They had to have gone through the two years to prove that they could stay in college. They didn't want freshman coming in and then dropping out and failing.

AW:

We would be—you know, we've, in Texas—Texas Tech is in the thick of this right now, we've grown so much and nobody wants to give up there, those first two year students because that cuts their numbers and all that sort of thing, but you can sure tell a difference when you teach someone who has had that college experience in a smaller or at that level. Anyway, that's a whole other aside. Can we go back, just for a minute, to Germany? There's a question that I'd like to—or an issue I'd like to explore. It's sort of related to your being in theater and in the military and being in Vietnam and coming back and that is, you're going over to—especially your first trip over to Germany—it's not that long after the Second World War and here we are, the victors, there the defeated and yet, you're interacting with them especially in that community theater, with people in the culture, this very short time after that whole defeat in the Second World War. What was that like?

DM:

Well, it was very visible in Frankfurt. Frankfurt had not been rebuilt. There were still bombed out shells of buildings in downtown Frankfurt. The opera house was a shell and that was so—the physical evidence of the war was shocking. When we got to Stuttgart then two years later that was all new because it had been completely destroyed in the war and then rebuilt in the fifties.

RM:

And Stuttgart was what they called rubble hill and it was all stuff from bombed out buildings that had been piled uphill and it was there so that they wouldn't forget.

AW:

So essentially like a monument.

RM:

Yes.

DM:

But our first place in Butscoff, we lived with another couple. It was their house, a new house, and they were really finishing it themselves and we had one floor and they had another. The land lady—they had an older child, but the land lady was pregnant too. Just as pregnant as I was, but she was down on her hands and knees every morning scrubbing the stoop and the sidewalk and everything and I'm laying back, "I'm pregnant, I can't." [laughter] That was a huge difference, but he had been a prisoner of war in the war in France, and so we actually communicated in French because we both spoke French, but no German. His French was probably better than his English, but not enough to be able to talk about it. The Germans we met were very, very kindly to us. There was no anti-American sentiment in Germany. There was in France at that time. You know, in France, it's come and gone.

AW:

Yeah. Robert Grave's book, "Goodbye to All That," his memoir of the First World War. You read that and you wonder and in fact, the English who were serving in that wondered, were they fighting the wrong group? [laughter] So that is an interesting relationship.

RM:

We made lots of really good friends in Germany. We had a German exchange student Sheila's last year in high school and we called her our German daughter. She's Sheila's age now and has four almost grown children.

DM:

All of them have now been exchange students somewhere in the world.

RM:

Their family has a history of being exchange students. An uncle was an exchange teacher in South Carolina, but we had a delightful year with Julia. We left Washington, D.C. with the kids, headed for Germany. Julia had to stay another month because the AFS student exchange program put them all on a bus and took them around parts of the United States so when she flew back to Germany, Diane and the kids met her at the airport.

DM:

So we were there in Frankfurt to meet her.

RM:

And we met her parents.

DM:

You had met them.

RM:

I had met them before.

DM:

When you were overseas with AAPEO.

RM:

In 1993, Julia wrote or called, and this was before email, I'm getting married. Can you come? So we packed up Sheila and we flew over for her wedding and that was delightful.

DM:

But during our three years there in Germany, we visited back and forth often because she was up in Northern Germany in university.

RM:

Since that time, the whole family came here—'98? Yeah, 1998. Julia was pregnant with Fanny at the time.

DM:

No, with Linus.

RM:

Linus?

DM:

Yeah, came with three kids. Number four in the oven. So we've obviously maintained that relationship with the family.

RM:

And the second time in Germany, we went to school. We went to the folks-holk [?] schule [1:51:36] and studied German and got pretty good. Diane much better than I was.

DM:

Because I would be out and about in the town. I could talk to people.

AW:

Yeah and so you could use it.

RM:

We were living on the economy. We had a nice apartment.

DM:

And German neighbors.

RM:

German neighbors.

DM:

This time we didn't have babies to trade babysitting for. We both had grown children, but we had cats, so we took care of each other's cats.

RM:

They spoke very little English, but they liked to drink champagne. They were always inviting us over for champagne.

AW:

Wow. I would've thought good beer, not champagne.

DM:

I know, and we like beer a lot more than champagne.

AW:

Me too. Champagne is not my favorite.

RM:

We went to Germany on our way to Prague in 2011, and stopped in Cologne, and Julia and the family met us and we had dinner and beer and everything and then went back and spent the night at their house before going back to Cologne and heading for Prague for Berlin first. So we saw them then, and then on our way back to Frankfurt to come home, we stopped in Stuttgart and saw a German friend there that we had made back in the sixties.

DM:

Sixties. He'd been in a play. Germans participated. This was a different one.

AW:

Oh a different one? Not the one?

RM:

This man had worked for the Americans as a civilian and his English was impeccable. All the kids spoke English. His wife—

DM:

Not so much.

RM:

Not so much, but better than probably we speak German.

DM:

Oh, gosh. Yes. Yeah, he reads American fiction for—English language fiction—for recreation.

AW:

That's a big jump when you can read literature in another language.

DM:

He's our age, and well obviously, you make friends with people your own age. We were all in our twenties back then.

AW:

Right, well let's see. I was—schedule wise, did you want to—

DM:

You think it is lunch time?

AW:

Sure and then we—

DM:

I thought we would go to Blue Star. We can get big entrée salads there.

AW:

That sounds good.

DM:

We can show you the area.

AW:

And what I'd like to still about—I need to kind of be out of here around two, two-thirty to do that other interview this afternoon, but I'd still like to hear more about Baton Rouge and antiques and record shops and so forth because I guess I just have a personal interest in all that being in both those things. So is this about the appropriate—be a good time for me to stop on this end. All right, I'm going to stop it and then we'll go have lunch.

Pause in Recording

AW:

All right, Andy Wilkinson again. Also, the third of December. Still with the Malones after a very nice lunch and a walk through the King William Historic District. It was an historic walk. It was very fun. And so you were giving me a lot of nice information about houses in the neighborhood, so one house I haven't heard you talk about a whole lot is this one. Other than how you found it and came by living here.

DM:

The name of it is the Berliner House because somebody named Berliner or somebody from Berlin built it. This was a German neighborhood. It was the first Anglo subdivision of San Antonio Suburb.

RM:

1904. It was built in 1904.

DM:

But the neighborhood was from like the 1860s and actually this is part of the original platted land of the Alamo fields, and there were, because of the river, there were Ezekias running through here.

AW:

And so these would have been farm?

DM:

Yeah. There's an early, early map of the area that shows about three farmhouses including across the river and here for the surveyed area and the rest of it is farmland. The land is as old as the earth.

RM:

The house next door was originally a one-story stone cottage and it's one of the oldest in the neighborhood.

DM:

Elmendorf. Mrs. Elmendorf lived there when we moved in, and there is the little town of Elmendorf, Texas, and that's who bought that big mansion. Took two years to restore it. Dirk Elmendorf of Rackspace, so the name continues. I talked about the turnover on our block. We are now the longest—have more seniority here than anybody on this block, but there are other places where they're the second, third generation who have lived in their family house.

AW:

Oh, really? So it's not all that much turnover for the district.

DM:

Not for the district. The guy next door right now who bought Mrs. Elmendorf, I guess, grew up here on the next street over. Well, actually several. His folks lived in several houses in the neighborhood and his mother still lives on King William.

RM:

We're unsure of the house's history up to 1945.

DM:

This house.

RM:

This house and the story goes that the Nunez patriarch won the Mexican lottery and bought this house in 1945.

DM:

For twenty-five thousand dollars.

RM:

And it stayed—

AW:

In 1945?

RM:

It stayed in the family. I don't know when they passed. They passed either sometime late eighties or early nineties, and the one son continued to live here with his wife and children. A brother lived in the downstairs apartment. I don't—do you recall when it went on the market? Because the heirs were starting to die and they said, "We want our share of inheritance of which the house was part." Rubin and his wife were living here by the good graces of the other kids.

DM:

So we bought it in '97, and someone told us, "Oh, that house has been for sale for a couple of years." You know, they'd been talking about it. There was no sign or anything, but everyone knew that if an offer came along—

AW:

They'd sell.

DM:

It was time, but the most fun thing—and we've stayed in touch with that family since we bought from them, and two years ago at fiesta time, there was a knock on the door and it was the children of Rubin Nunez who we bought the house from. So the grandchildren of the original owners. They were all here for fiesta. There were like eight of them and they'd all grown up in this house and they said, "Could we come in and look?" We knew some of them. Over the years, we'd met some of them. I said, "Sure." They talked about the Christmas tree in the stairwell which we still do. We put it on the piano and the Christmas tree there. They talked about the chandeliers which they said grandma had gone to Mexico to buy them when they got rid of the monarchy in Mexico and they were having a fire sale out of the Maximilian's Palace.

RM:

I thought we learned that from—what's his face? The guy with the furs?

DM:

No, we told him that.

RM:

Oh, we told him. Okay.

DM:

No, the kids said that.

RM:

They came from Maximilian's Palace.

DM:

That's what they said, but they got two Maximilian's Palace, we feel quite sure, from Prague because these exact same chandeliers are hanging in a big restaurant museum space.

RM:

Building in Prague.

DM:

And that's the first time we'd ever seen—

AW:

So were these gas originally?

RM:

I don't know.

DM:

I don't think so. Gas would have burned up, so I think somebody did the grand tours. I don't know. They may have come from Mexico.

AW:

They don't look Mexican, though. Do they?

DM:

No, they're from Prague originally. Bohemian glass, Czech glass, and the one in the dining room has the same glass straws, but the design is a little different.

AW:

Yeah. The arms holding the lamps are different.

DM:

Yeah, so it's—this particularly is so art nouveau looking, like everything in Prague is, but they also asked if the whole in the dining room floor was still there. We said, "Yes." It's a trap door.

AW:

To go under the crawl space?

DM:

Uh-huh. That's how our termite man or any inspector gets down there, and they said it was like that to hide ammunition because this was the German embassy. I have found no corroboration of that. Clearly, it was a German house. It was the Berliner house because they were all German houses, but we don't know where the story about ammunition came from. So those were the most interesting things about the house. Our house is not on the walking guided tour because nothing historic or significant ever happened here.

RM:

At least that anybody knows about.

DM:

And for the same family owning it, living in it since 1945, it was never chopped up into apartments. It was never—

RM:

But they did rent out the rooms as a bed and breakfast. The TV room up there that they rented out.

DM:

But there was no separate bathroom. They just had to share the bathroom with the family. That was odd. So anyway, we love the pocket doors, the fireplace. There's five fireplaces in all. At some point, I figure that the bathroom and hall were the original kitchen. This was a four-square house. We've also been told that it was built at the same as the quarters at Fort Sam Houston. It's the same style. The porch, it's exactly the same.

RM:

The porch was originally wooden, and sometime in the eighties, Josie, the wife who lived here, conned—I guess by that time it was historic district? Probably was. Conned them into letting her put in a concrete porch and steps. What a wonderful thing because we have friends over in Tobin Hills in the historic district and he has to have his porch redone every two years because the paint—the water puddles on the steps cracks the paint and etc., etc.

AW:

Plus they move around a lot. Wooden ones do. Wow.

DM:

So there was a back porch, a small back porch, and at some point, they added kitchen and the equivalent room above and made the porch and kitchen a big kitchen, and then at some point, it burned, and so they redid the kitchen like in the seventies or eighties or whenever it burned. That's the only—well, the other updating is the claw foot tub is no longer upstairs. It's in the apartment.

RM:

They—I guess after it burned, they did update the wiring. There's still evidence of the tube and knob wiring in the attic. It's not functional. There's evidence of it there. We had a great deal of wiring updated also.

AW:

That's smart.

RM:

I think they brought it up to code then in terms of number of outlets per room and things like that. GFCI and water places, bathrooms, kitchen, all that.

DM:

We had these bookshelves built in, and we also had a long wall of these same bookshelves upstairs in the hall. There's about a twelve-foot long hall with just solid bookshelves because we have a lot of books and there was no place to put them. Other than that, the inside is cosmetically the same.

AW:

Well, as I was saying yesterday when I saw the bookcases, I would have never thought they were added. They fit so—

DM:

They match.

RM:

The contractor did a nice—he and his carpenters did a nice job.

DM:

I think they had to have the trim specially milled to match it.

AW:

Yeah because it matches exactly over here. Quite nice.

DM:

I do not think this is original. This is totally different from the other fireplaces and the other fireplaces in all the houses I've been in in the neighborhood. The people, the couple that we bought it from, she had French provincial furniture in here, and I imagine she got this kind of Frenchie—

AW:

Tile.

RM:

Well, the same design is carried on the mantle.

DM:

I know, but it's just totally different from the other fireplaces which are much plainer and oak. I don't know.

RM:

We've had maybe two fires in the fireplace in seventeen years because very early on, I had them inspect the chimneys and they're not in any condition for use.

AW:

That would be very expensive. Plus, as we all know, fires actually make your whole house cooler because it pulls air through so it's warm where the fire is, but the rest of the house cools down, but they're a wonderful, spiritual thing to me. Well, let's see, we've got actually not a whole lot of time.

DM:

Not a lot of time. There was one thing you wanted find out about and I can't remember what it was.

AW:

Well, there were two things and one was about your time in Baton Rouge, but I think that's going to take a while. Is it not?

DM:

No. [laughter] We worked at the theater. Period.

AW:

Well but you had an antique store and you had a record store. So I mean, we don't have to take a long time if you think not and then the other thing and I would prefer to tackle the other thing when we have a little more time next time we get together and that is talking about, in your case, math and art, but in both your cases, you are among those rare artists who have both sides of their brains and I think that whole relationship and your wonderful comment yesterday about show business is two words sums it up pretty well, but I think the influence of one on the other is something that people don't tend to discuss and oftentimes because they're one side or the other and they're uncomfortable with the other and don't discuss, so if you don't mind, I would like to save that for when we really have some too.

RM:

That's fine.

DM:

Okay. We can think about.

AW:

Yeah, think about it a little bit and I know we're going to be talking again. As I said, I'll be back down not long after the first of the year.

DM:

We'll get you together with the Simpsons.

RM:

I'll get those programs out of the attic so you can take them back.

AW:

Yes, I'll be glad to, and if when you do get them out, if you would give me an estimate just by email or something about a standard file box that you get at like Office Depot or something. That's our kind of measurement. We call it a linear foot. If I had some idea of how many of those, that helps me have a place for it when I get back to root things out. Well so there probably is more to talk about in Baton Rouge than just well, you had antiques and—

DM:

Well, we lost our parents. We came back to be close to Texas because they were elderly and sure enough within a year and a half, our three remaining parents had died. Mine within five weeks of each other in '88.

RM:

My mother died in '91.

DM:

So we inherited—he's an only child. I'm an only daughter. My brother lives in Spokane. We inherited two households full of stuff, and we said, you know, we've always talked about the possibility of having an antique shop sometime when we retire. Let's start with this stuff. So I did, and I sold it, and I said, well I'm going to have to replace it which means I have to go shopping and at the same time, I was the designer at the little theatre and I would go shopping for props and furniture and stuff and I'd always find other things on my shopping trips. Like, oh man, this is fabulous.

AW:

Well and as you were showing me yesterday up in the other space, I found these hats. I didn't have anything to with them then, but I knew I'd never find them if I needed them.

DM:

Exactly so I was buying like that already because of the theatre and then I realized that I would have to shop to replenish stock and I told Rick, you've got to collect something. You've got to decide to do something to give you a purpose when we go to antique malls and our kids were halfway across the country, and so we were travelling to see them a couple of times a year and we would stop at antique malls. Erin was in Rochester and that is the best shopping in the world for antiques and mahogany furniture and stuff which they ate up in Baton Rouge, so he started buying vinyl.

RM:

Started with the excess musical theater, musical comedies, out of my collection which didn't go anywhere. Then I started expanding, and all of the sudden, I've got everything.

DM:

We had grown to fifteen hundred square feet in that antique mall in Baton Rouge when we decided to move here so we started moving the antiques first. We found space in antique mall, brought a few things over. The business was never ever as successful here because the kind of English furniture—I buy the kind of stuff that I'm surrounded with now. As a matter of fact, some of the stuff here was in the shop and it's kind of English based and traditional, and it is not Texas style at all. It just didn't go here, but Baton Rouge and New Orleans, in particular, are very traditional.

RM:

My record business was always very good up until 9/11.

AW:

Really? And what was the difference?

RM:

The tourist business dropped. The bottom dropped out on us. There were a lot conventions here that got cancelled. We used to get lots of conventioners coming in and spending bucks.

DM:

They all collect something. Everybody collects something and when you're out of town, oh, there's a new place to look for my fill-in-the-blank.

AW:

My salt shakers or my spoons or my whatever. Right.

DM:

Exactly. Beanie Babies or lighters or glassware.

AW:

Ballpoints or fountainpens.

DM:

A particular kind of dishes. And so the tourists—our shop here was just around the corner from the Alamo, and there were three antique malls on the same block so they'd come and hit all three of us and we would—we were so, so busy until 9/11. Never recovered, and two of those malls closed up. They're gone.

RM:

Our mall closed, and so we moved. You already had space across the street. Didn't you? Or did you?

DM:

No.

RM:

We moved across the street. It was a relatively new mall. The record business was never very good there, and then they closed that up and moved out north.

DM:

Well, in Alamo Heights on Broadway.

RM:

Alamo Heights, and so we both moved out there.

DM:

We downsized each time. We got rid of stuff.

RM:

The record business was just never any good out there, and that's when I decided to get out. Packed it all up, sold most of the rock and roll here. Neighborhood has an annual garage sale that everybody participates in. I sold lots of records at that. Fifty cents, a buck a piece, fifty cents or twelve—

DM:

He'd sell hundreds of dollars' worth of records at that price every year until they just used them up.

RM:

What nobody wanted, I gave to Salvation Army. I still have bunches of musical comedies out there in the garage that nobody wants.

DM:

And I've got boxes of dishes and stuff. We're at the point where it's time to divest, so I'm thrilled you want our paper.

AW:

We do. We want your collection, and I think those programs, from an archival point of view, are very interesting because those really fit in the category of ephemera. They disappear.

RM:

We may even have some from Indianapolis of the dinner theater with Barry Corbin.

AW:

That would be great. When we get those kind of things, we do an inventory. We put that online, so even if a person is looking for Indianapolis Theatre, they can search on the web and it'll get a hit saying, well in Lubbock, Texas, they have—you know because that's how researchers work now, and things are not so much geographically centered because of the way that archives work. You're important to our archive, but here you are in San Antonio. You've been all over the world, and so that's an important thing, but it also means that whatever materials you donate will get a use beyond.

DM:

Our kids would throw it away.

AW:

One of our people at the collection, they say that history is what people didn't throw out. That's what history is.

DM:

We've made a donation to the collection. A couple of donations already, some pictures and papers, but also a season's worth of posters from the little theatre. We already have some collection started there.

AW:

Great. I'll check that out and get an idea of what we have and how we have it styled and we'll just increase it by whatever we get.

DM:

The pictures and clippings and stuff were all related to University Theater when we were there.

RM:

Those came out of our archives. We can't find the book.

DM:

We have a joint scrapbook of our time together at Texas Tech with all the shows and all the programs. We can't find it. It looks like these.

AW:

We would dearly love to be able to scan—

DM:

We'll just give it to you. Oh, you mentioned scanning these pictures, can I? The wedding pictures. Can I send you electronic scans, something? Or do you want hard copies or what?

AW:

We would take an electronic scan. We would like for it to at least be six hundred DPI which is a pretty big file, and usually you have to either upload it to a—

RM:

I could always upload it to Dropbox, give you a shared link.

AW:

What we would also ask is that for those that your daughters are not going to say, we've got to have these. At some point, you say, well, we will let you have originals, if it's possible. The reason being, as you both well know, the technology for what you do with copying things improves by leaps and bounds. We still don't, even as good as digital is, we still don't have anything that compares to analog prints or film.

RM:

I think I can scan 600 DPI. If I can't, I've got a separate flatbed scanner that will.

AW:

It's actually not too hard to—that's a pretty common—

RM:

Shouldn't be any problem.

AW:

The problem with it for most people is it creates really big files and then you have to have a place to put it.

RM:

I've got plenty of storage.

AW:

Cool and just to be thinking when you're ready to start getting rid of things to let us know. We're not a museum. Artifacts are not—although, you know, and I don't mean to say, give us this. This kind of artifact, we have places to put small things.

DM:

Well we probably could give you that. I can't imagine that the kids would want it.

AW:

You don't need to. Think about it.

DM:

I don't mean right now.

AW:

Think about it, but those kinds of things that are pertinent to the collection, we're very interested in and also, in terms of books, we have a fairly large non-circulating library at the Southwest Collection, and the titles in that are geared towards supporting the collected papers that we have. If there's a book that you have that was important when you were in theater at the beginning or sometime or in management or whatever else, then we can add that to the non-circulating library meaning it never gets thrown away and is available there for people to research, so that would be a very small percentage of the kind of books you have, but that's a thing to think about as you start—

DM:

That's interesting because we are transferring the theater library to our daughter who is now teaching theater, but not the old one, not old ones because there's so many new, you know, the textbooks and stuff. I still have Michael Chekov's first six lessons to an actor, and I still have my three Stanislavsky basic books which were Mr. Schulz's bibles. We all had to have the books.

RM:

Do we still have—he had a book he used on technique.

DM:

But all of those textbooks from our years, we still have?

AW:

Do they happen to have your marginalia? Your notes and things.

RM:

Probably.

DM:

It depends.

AW:

We like that. We appreciate that. One of the other things that we do when we have a chance to get books like this to add to our non-circulating library is that we first of all, make sure we don't already have that particular book. Even then, we try to keep two copies of things. You just want to make sure you have something that—we don't check them out. They have to use them in the building, but still, we like to have, for a lot of things, more than one copy just in case. So again, when you're going through those kinds of things, think about that and things that your daughter won't use will certainly be of interest.

RM:

We have the directing book too. We got one in [inaudible], I think it was, Schulz used and it's probably got lots of marginalia.

DM:

The book that has the most notes in it is our joint complete works of Shakespeare which I still use. When I'm doing a Shakespeare play, I go back to that.

RM:

We took a Shakespeare course together.

DM:

And so we both wrote notes in it, and it's really helpful.

AW:

Remember us in your will on that book. Keep using it, but those kinds of things, I think those are

incredibly valuable. One of the things, again, because of my interest in writing and so forth is that I really—and we want to talk much more about this next time is the creative process. What you've—and we've talked about it some already and a lot of it having to do with you being students of Mr. Schulz, but I would like a chance to let you talk more about the fact that you're still getting that Shakespeare book out when you do Shakespeare, those kinds of things too, and the notes within that book are a guide to someone who wants to see how you think and work.

DM:

I find that I need alone time. I was able to write this musical in '76 because that's when he was in Thailand, and I had time to think and ponder in silence. Two years ago, I was away almost all of the year, I had several guest directing gigs, and so I was out of town. By myself, I'm able to just have creative thinking time.

RM:

You don't have any distractions.

AW:

Yeah, well exactly. I have two days on the weekend to write, but I can't get much done because my wife is home. She's not working and we have things to do and so to write, I have to take vacation time when I'm home by myself. You probably know this anecdotal story about D. H. Lawrence who was being interviewed once, and he had been married and divorced, married and divorced, or whatever. The person said, is it something difficult about being a writer that makes it hard to maintain a relationship? He said, "Well, yes it's hard to find someone that when they walk into your study and you're leaned back in your chair with your feet on the table and your hands behind your head and they say, 'What are you doing?' And you say, 'I'm writing,' and they believe you."

DM:

That's true. That's where it happens. It happens here first.

AW:

Your fingers on the keys or your pencil in your hand is a very small part of it. Well, I'm going to—this is a good stopping part. This has been a wonderful couple of days and hours for me.

DM:

What a treat to spend all this time talking about ourselves. Everybody loves to do that.

AW:

I love to hear it, so we're all happy with that and thanks, too, for taking me over to the theater and the walk that we the chance to do in the neighborhood. That's been really, really great fun

for me so I'll check back right after the holiday and kind of see what your schedule is like, and if something comes up and you think, oh I should know about this or that, please—you know how to get ahold of me. In terms of, we'd talked a little bit about—well, I'll ahead and shut this off before we talk about Barry again. Thanks again to both of you.

DM:

Thank you.

End of Recording



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