

This transcript has been redacted for PII. For complete transcript access, please apply to blanders@odu.edu.

Tidewater Voices Oral History Project
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia
For Research Purposes Only

Speaker 1: Okay, today is Tuesday, September 26, 2006 and if you'll please state your full name.

Speaker 2: I'm [WORDS REMOVED]

Speaker 1: And you're from?

Speaker 2: Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Speaker 1: Were you born there or is that where you lived?

Speaker 2: I was born in Norfolk at Norfolk General Hospital July the 15, 1946 at 10:40 am.

Speaker 1: And, how long did you stay in Norfolk?

Speaker 2: I stayed in Norfolk approximately five years.

Speaker 1: And then you moved . . .

Speaker 2: Moved to Princess Anne County and then back to Norfolk.

Speaker 1: Does that exist today, Princess Anne County?

Speaker 2: Princess Anne County was actually annexed by the City of Virginia Beach

Speaker 1: So it's Virginia Beach today?

Speaker 2: It's Virginia Beach today, and actually the city of Norfolk was starting to annex Princess Anne County, therefore Virginia Beach, uh, annexed all of the existing Princess Anne County and turned it into the City of Virginia Beach.

Speaker 1: Was it always the City of Virginia Beach and Princess Anne County? This (Virginia Beach) was never a county?

Speaker 2: No, this was a Virginia Beach Bureau down here at the Ocean Front. This is what they called the Virginia Beach Bureau, and uhm, Princess Anne County, actually I think Virginia Beach Bureau was in Princess Anne County.

Speaker 1: Okay. Give me a landmark where you were in Princess Anne County. What's that near today?

Speaker 2: It's uh, actually the county line ran from Davis' Corner, uh, on Virginia Beach Blvd. over to Indian River Road. The west side of Indian River Road was, uh, actually Virginia Beach.

Speaker 1: Oh.

Speaker 2: And Princess Anne County, at one time, actually ran from the Ocean Front to Chesapeake Blvd. in Norfolk.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: And Chesapeake Blvd. is a two-lane road, and it used to go two ways in each direction, but now it's one way in one direction and one way in the other direction and that was the county line. Princess Anne County actually ran from east Ocean View up, uh, Chesapeake Blvd. to, auh, Little Creek Road, and then down Military Highway to Lansdale Traffic Circle over to Indian River Road.

Speaker 1: Wow. And why did you move from Norfolk to Princess Anne County?

Speaker 2: 'Cause, uh, my grandmother had a house down here and we moved down at her house for a while.

Speaker 1: And how long were you there?

Speaker 2: Uh, Approximately two or three years.

Speaker 1: And then you moved to Virginia Beach?

Speaker 2: No, I was in Virginia Beach at that time.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: That was part of Virginia Beach.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: So, then I moved, we moved to Ocean View and, uh, actually no, we moved to Lafayette Shores in Norfolk. I was in the second and third, partially third grade at Lafayette Shores in Norfolk, and then we moved to Ocean View, the Bayview section of Ocean View. I went to Bayview Elementary for one year, and then we moved back to Virginia Beach, or Princess Anne County it was.

Speaker 1: Okay, and when you say we moved, who is that?

Speaker 2: My family, my mother, father and brother.

Speaker 1: You have one brother?

Speaker 2: I have two brothers now. My mother had a brother (meant son) late in life, she was like forty-one years old. No, thirty-nine years, I'm sorry. And a she had my youngest brother.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: And both my parents are deceased.

Speaker 1: And when did they pass?

Speaker 2: My mother passed in 1966 and my father passed in 2001.

Speaker 1: And when you moved in with your grandmother?

Speaker 2: No, no we moved to a house that she owned.

Speaker 1: Oh, was it with her?

Speaker 2: No. Now I lived with my grandmother the first two years of my life, and then when I was three years old we actually moved to Bemerelle on, it was a navel housing on Hampton Blvd. and Bemerelle is actually still there, so that's, and I'm sixty years old, so . . .

Speaker 1: And your grandmother has passed?

Speaker 2: Grandmother has passed.

Speaker 1: Okay.

--FIVE MINUTES--

Speaker 2: My grandmother's farm that she grew up on was between Camp Pendleton and Dam Neck and it went from the Ocean Front all the way over to Oceana. Well, my great-grandfather, he, eventually sold that farm and bought another farm over on Long Creek, augh, next to the old Cox High School, or I guess it's John B. Dye now.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: But that was my great-grandfather's farm over there.

Speaker 1: So, this is your mother's . . . parents?

Speaker 2: Mother's mother, yes.

Speaker 1: Okay, so, are all of your mother's parents from this area?

Speaker 2: Yes, my grandfather and my grandmother. My grandfather was from Portsmouth. My grandmother was from Old Princess Anne County.

Speaker 1: What about your father's parents?

Speaker 2: They're from West Virginia.

Speaker 1: Okay, and did your dad grow up in West Virginia?

Speaker 2: Yes, he did.

Speaker 1: Okay, and so what brought him here?

Speaker 2: He joined the navy.

Speaker 1: That would do it. And he met your mother here?

Speaker 2: Met my mother here.

Speaker 1: Okay, very interesting. Do you, you don't remember being with your grandmother 'cause you were so little?

Speaker 2: No, I do remember being with my grandmother. My grandmother, she passed away, in, I want to say, the early nineties, but there were times that I would go . . . ah, my parents drank. They had a drinking problem, so I would, at this time, I was in my early teens, we lived in Aragona Village which was the first subdivision in the city of Virginia Beach, or Old Princess Anne County that we'll call it, and ah, I would go to her house in Norfolk, in Park Place in Norfolk, she lived at 28th street, 500 block of 28th street, Norfolk. And I would go there and stay with her, because it was like a safe place for me and I knew I'd be taken care of, and there my grandmother taught me things about life and cooking, and people, and how to read people, and that sort of thing. My grandmother had what we called horse sense. It's it's like common sense, but ah it's it's, I guess it's ah, the best way I can put it, she was country, country educated in which we call horse sense.

Speaker 1: Okay. So, kind of like street smarts?

Speaker 2: Sort of like street smarts, but in a country way, yeah.

Speaker 1: Yeah, exactly.

Speaker 2: And they say, they used to have a saying about people, that if someone was real smart and shrewd they'd say he's got a lot of horse sense. So, evidently, it was, they were referring to horses were smart I guess.

Speaker 1: Right. Right.

Speaker 2: I'm not sure, but how that actually came about but, I remember that as a child, somebody saying, you know, he's pretty smart cause he gotta lot of horse sense, so . . .

Speaker 1: Now that you mentioned that she taught you cooking. Do you have a favorite recipe from her?

Speaker 2: My favorite recipe from her is her vegetable beef soup and her fried corn.

Speaker 1: Like a corn cake?

Speaker 2: Well, well, no, no, we'd take corn on the cob and we'd boil it like you gonna eat corn on the cob.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: But then we'd take a knife after it was boiled and skin it off the cob and put it in a big black frying pan with butter, and but before we'd put it in there we'd fry up some bacon so the grease from the bacon would mix with the corn and the butter and then we'd put confectionary sugar. A lot of people when they cook they use regular sugar but the regular sugar doesn't dissolve as easy as confectionary sugar.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Cause in a lot of my recipes I use confectionary sugar cause it dissolves quicker and it dissolves fully, so . . .

Speaker 1: That's awesome. Would the corn dish be a side to a meat dish, or would that be a main dish?

Speaker 2: Usually, ah, because of modern times you don't get the chance to get your vegetables like you did then. Vegetables were more plentiful to get because you didn't have the processing that you have now.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: So, if you wanted like fresh corn or corn, you would pull corn off, or go to a roadside stand or something like that.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: And, ah, but you would, in answer to your question, you could have your corn with your mashed potatoes or ah green beans and that kind of stuff.

Speaker 1: Did your grandmother have animals?

Speaker 2: None.

Speaker 1: No.

Speaker 2: Maybe when she was young.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: But as long as I knew her she didn't have an animal at all.

Speaker 1: Tell me how you got your name - that we call you.

--10 MINUTES--

Speaker 2: My name, my nickname is Joker and I got the name the day I was born. Ah, my father and my two uncles, they were my mother's brothers went to the ah hospital to see my mom and see me of course, and they were standing there looking in the nursery window and the nurse brought me over to the window my dad said, "Look at that little Joker." And my uncles, merchant seamen that they are the crewed individuals, they went back to my grandmother's house. My grandmother said, "What are they gonna call him?" They don't say back then, country people don't say, "What are they gonna name him? They say, "What are they gonna call him?" Cause when you, their slang was when they talk to somebody, or let's see when I called him over here or I called him here that sort of thing. But anyway, she said, "What are they gonna call him?" And my uncle spoke up real quick and said, "They're gonna call him Joker." And the name stuck. From that day, day one, I got the name Joker.

Speaker 1: I love that. Are there any other slang terms that you can think of that your grandparents or your parents or people growing up used like "horse smarts" or "calling him?"

Speaker 2: Um, not right off hand, but I will eventually, in this interview I'll try to think of something.

Speaker 1: Did people, do you think people use profanity, or we call them in our class taboo words, more today than they did when you were growing up?

Speaker 2: Absolutely. Ah, when I was growing up, a very seldom, I mean you always heard the young boys swore a lot, because it was like a sign of, I guess they thought it was being an adult, and and not, and looking at it at an intelligent side like you do now, I mean, I mean, I used to swear just like anyone else and I still do sometimes. I guess all of us do but, I try to stress to my children or if I hear a young person cussing I said, "It's a sign of ignorance to use those kind of words. A smart person will use more intelligent words. And, and, but in answer to your question, the boys did but they weren't as loud with it and, you, it was very seldom you heard a woman use swear words, ah especially the caliber of words that they use today.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: So, they're not ah, they just, it's like, you know, they do it because it's a way of drawing attention.

Speaker 1: Did you ever get in trouble from your parents for using?

Speaker 2: Soap. I I I used the the 'b' word one time and my mother actually took soap and put it in my mouth. And my children, when I, I when they were young and I'd catch them swearing which was not very often, um I made a deal with them. I said, "I will not say those words around you, if you don't say them around me, and if I do, I gotta brush my teeth with hot sauce or you do." So, a couple times I had to brush my teeth and a couple times my daughter had to brush her teeth, my son, I think he only had to brush his once. So . . .

Speaker 1: Were you very mischievous growing up?

Speaker 2: Absolutely.

Speaker 1: Do you remember anything in particular that you did?

Speaker 2: Well, one time when I was staying at my grandmother's house in Norfolk, the man next door was a clown shiner, and he had painted his boots one evening for a parade that he was gonna be in the next day. Well, when he went in the house, I went out there and got into his red paint, and painted my name on his sidewalk, and on the side of his shed, and . . .

Speaker 1: Your name?

Speaker 2: My name. And, so, the next morning, the man came out and there was Joker's name all over the place, and needless to say I was severely punished for it.

Speaker 1: Do you remember about how old you were?

Speaker 2: I was five or six years old. When I did that.

Speaker 1: How about in school, were you a good student?

Speaker 2: No. I was absolutely awful.

Speaker 1: You didn't enjoy school?

Speaker 2: I did not enjoy school until I got to high school. I loved high school.

Speaker 1: Why?

Speaker 2: The social aspects of it. That's all it was. I was an escapee from high school. I didn't, I think they graduated me cause they just didn't want to have to write an excuse for me to vote the next year. So . . .

Speaker 1: Did you go to college?

Speaker 2: Ah, for a short time, a very short time.

Speaker 1: Where did you go?

Speaker 2: I went to Tidewater.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: And I was, had all the intentions of being a clinical psychologist for adolescents, but as I worked with someone who was actually at that point and they were sharing information and and and showing me basically what I was in for, and I found that the parents were the ones in need of help, more so than the children. And uh it was hard, and I'm very emotional about young people, and I didn't think I could deal with it.

Speaker 1: Right.

--15 MINUTES--

Speaker 2: So, I deal with my neighbor's kids and that sort of thing on a daily basis and it's at my own speed, and I, you know, I can pick and choose what situations that I want to deal with, basically. So, I think I do a better job in that sort of thing.

Speaker 1: And, so, what did you do when you decided not to continue school?

Speaker 2: I was an engineer actually for the railroad.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: I was in the Navy for four years, ah from 1966 to 1970 and I got out of the Navy, I went to work for the railroad, and I was going to use my GI Bill to go to school because the way the railroad job was is I had a lot of leisure time and a very flexible time to go to school. But, as like I say, when I started into school and realized that the field I really wanted to go into was not going to be the thing for me and the money that I was making for the railroad was a lot more than I could ever making doing, you know, that particular sort thing.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: And . . .

Speaker 1: And, you were with railroad forever.

Speaker 2: Thirty-two years.

Speaker 1: So, tell me about meeting [WORD REMOVED].

Speaker 2: [WORD REMOVED]. . . I was married right out of high school for almost five years.

Speaker 1: Your high school sweetheart?

Speaker 2: Yeah, high school sweetheart, and we separated and then we got a divorce after five years. It was very quick, but anyway, [WORD REMOVED] ah, my ex-mother-in-law called me one Friday and asked me could I take some um boxes and stuff to Richmond, Virginia, for my sister-in-law cause she she and another girl were moving in together. They'd graduated from college and they'd got this apartment together. So, I said I would and the next morning I went up to my mother-in-law's who lives in Thalia, which is here in Virginia Beach, and to load up the boxes and [WORD REMOVED] was sitting at the breakfast table with wet hair, wire rimmed glasses. She looked like she was twelve years old, and I said, "This is really something here," I said and you know and I'm thinking this has got to be the cousin, because she had a cousin named [WORD REMOVED], who was young. Well, low and behold it wasn't. It was my sister-in-law's roommate. So, my mother-in-law introduced us and my mother-in-law, in

the back of her mind, set all this up. This was her way of introducing me to [WORD REMOVED] in a nonchalant way because she didn't think that I would actually come up there and meet somebody. And it was a plan. It was her plan all along, because my in-laws all loved me. I was just still a member of the family according to them, but actually you can't do that. No matter what they say it's different. And, so, anyhow it took me all day long to ask [WORD REMOVED] out on a date and everybody knew I was going to ask her out, and they kept asking me, "Have you asked her? Have you asked her?" Finally, I did ask her, and uh, so, we went out, and we started dating and we've been married for thirty years.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Speaker 2: And, it's the best deal I ever had in my whole life.

Speaker 1: Where's [WORD REMOVED] from?

Speaker 2: [WORDS REMOVED]'s from Richmond.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: She was actually born, I think, in Indiana, maybe. I think she was born in Indiana. I can't remember right off hand.

Speaker 1: [WORD REMOVED] asked me um to ask you to tell me about the time you got caught with the ladder going in the window or something. Where you trying to see her?

Speaker 2: No.

Speaker 1: Maybe that was a different story.

Speaker 2: Might be a different story. I'm just trying to think. Oh, oh, yes, yes. I ah I was in high school, and when I left high, when I went to high school from junior high school, some of the kids I went to junior high school with went to Cox High School, which was a new high school. So, most of the kids that we knew in elementary school, well, not most of them, but some of them, because at the time in Virginia Beach it was really rural. There's subdivisions all over Virginia Beach now, but like I said then, back in my my ah elementary years, late elementary years, early junior high school years, ah that's when they started building subdivisions. So, there weren't that many schools, and we actually, and I'll get to the ladder story in a second.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: So.

Speaker 1: No, this is great.

Speaker 2: This, I'm building up to it. Actually the kids from Fort Story and the kids from Sandbridge went to Kempsville Meadows and the kids from Aragona Village where I grew up went to Kempsville Meadows.

Speaker 1: Wow.

--20 MINUTES--

Speaker 2: And, so anyway, when we went from Kempsville Meadows to Kempsville Junior High, which is Kemps Landing now, some of those kids ah went to school down down at Virginia Beach Junior High School I mean was middle school now, and then the kids from ah ah down at the courthouse and Sandbridge, we they went to Kemps Kemps Landing. Okay, then when we went to Princess Anne High School, Cox High School opened up and ah Kellam High School opened up.

Speaker 1: Is it the Cox that exists now, or is it Cox where Great Neck (middle school) is?

Speaker 2: Where Great Neck is.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: So, anyhow, so we sort of like went in different directions but we, but anyway, so I went to work at the drug store, Burrow Martin Drug Store, where Aragona Village is, as a stock boy delivering medicine, and one day this girl came in, and I hadn't seen her in a couple of years, so we sort of renewed our friendship and what have you. And ah, so, I delivered medicine, three days a week, 'til ten o'clock at night, well then when I'd get off, I'd go out with my friends or whatever, but this, so I started seeing this girl. So, she called me and asked me, would I, you know, come over to her house, and so I did a couple times, and what I was doing is, I'd go to her house and I'd climb through the window into her bedroom and we'd sit in there and talk and what have you. So, anyhow, cause we were young teenagers, very young, I was like fifteen or sixteen at the time, so then . . .

Speaker 1: So, this is what I have to look forward to.

Speaker 2: Yeah, well, one particular, one particular afternoon she called me and wanted to know if I was coming over, and I said, "Yeah". Well, she started saying some things to me that were sort of private and I was getting real embarrassed cause I couldn't say anything because the women who work in the drug store were sort of standing there. And I, you know, I was sort of, you know, I couldn't say anything, really. I couldn't respond to her questions, accusations and what have you. Well, her father had picked up the

extension and she got very graphic you know, and she wasn't one of the nicer girls. But any how, so, I said, "I'll be there." So, I drove over there after I got off work and I parked three or four houses down from her house. I walked up to the yard and climbed up this little bitty ladder and I start, I said her name, and she said, "Yeah." She sounded like she was crying. And I said, "What the heck is wrong with you?" Well, as I'm starting to climb through the window all of a sudden everything went gray. And I'm laying in the grass and I hear her screaming, "Run, run, he's gonna kill ya." Well, her father was waiting at the window and when I started through, he punched me in the face, and knocked me back in the grass. So, when I realized where I was and what was going on sorta, I took off running for my car as hard as I could run cause it was three or four houses down, and I jumped in the car and I hit the ignition, you know I fired it up and it was a straight shift and by then he's running out of his yard towards me and I'm trying to push the clutch in and I was so scared that my leg was shaking like this, and I'm getting it in gear because I had a floor shift, it was a hot rod and I punched it and I'm backing down the street and then I locked up the breaks and spun the car around cause I used to race go-carts. Anyway, so I blasted off down the street and when I got back to my house, or back to my neighborhood, I went up to where the guys all hung out on the corner at night and they said, "Good gosh, you aughta see your face." And I said, "Yeah, I know, it's sore." They said, "What happened?" And I said, "Somebody punched me right in the face." When then I told them what happened and they were all, "Hee Hee Haw Haw," like it was real funny. And it was, right now it is funny to me because it was an adventure. It was something in my life I could look back on and talk about. But anyhow, ah so, when I went home, my mother was up waiting for me because the guy had called my house. Got I guess he got my number from the girl and what have you, his daughter, and called my house, and he told me mother that he was coming over in the morning to see my father and her and this that and the other. My father at the time was a fireman for civil service on the base, so he worked twenty-four on, fourth-eight off. So, anyway, my mother, she said, "You aughta see your face." And my mother, my mother cussed like a sailor, you were talking about people cussing, and she, she, had a mouth on her but any way, she cussed me one side, down the other and she didn't want a scandal and all this other stuff and my dad was going to kill me when he found out. Well, my mother didn't tell my dad. He saw may face and saw I got in a fight. But evidently when he called she probably cussed him out to no end saying that if his daughter was any kind of a person at all she wouldn't have had boys climbing in and out of the window and all this other stuff. So, I guess he felt like, I guess I'm wasting my time going over there. That was my only, that's the only thing I can figure.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: But, three or four days later I'm at the drugstore and the phone rings and the girl said, "It's for you." And the girl said, "Boy, that was close wasn't it," when I answered the phone? I said, "Close, I almost got killed." She said, "Well, my parents are going out tonight. You want to come over?" I said, "I don't think I'm even coming near your neighborhood. But, as time went on, when I was in the military, how small this

world is, one of the guys that was in my squadron at NAS Norfolk, actually was married to her and I didn't know it until they had a function at the squadron where our families got to come and there she was. And she still chuckled about that. It was still funny to her, so . . .

Speaker 1: What a riot. That's a good story.

Speaker 2: Well, it's, I ah, I had a very colorful childhood as a teenager because, I knew those were the best years of my life and I took full advantage of them. I mean full advantage of them.

Speaker 1: Where your brothers mischievous as well?

Speaker 2: No. Absolutely not.

Speaker 1: You were enough?

Speaker 2: My brother said, one of the toughest things he had to do was go through life being identified as Joker's brother and not [WORDS REMOVED].

Speaker 1: Is this the older one?

Speaker 2: Yes. And the younger one, he had issues, but that's, that's, you know, there's no sense in even going there.

Speaker 1: Are they still living?

Speaker 2: Yes. I haven't seen them in four years, and they live in Chesapeake. So, we're not close at all.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: It's just not a close thing, but ah, I'll tell you another story, if you want to hear something that's kind of cool. When I was a teenager ah, and my stories are a lot about my teenage years ah, the Dave Clark Five, I don't know if you know who they are but, they're a British band and when music went from good old rockn' roll music to the British Invasion they called it, and . . .

Speaker 1: The Beatles . . .

Speaker 2: The Beatles, and there was Herman and the Hermits and Dave Clark Five. Anyway, Dave Clark Five did a concert at Princess Anne High football stadium. Cause see we didn't have things then like Scope, and the Dome, well, the Dome came, but after, shortly after that, that's where they had concerts also, but they didn't have like Scope and

that sort of thing. But anyway, the Dave Clark Five was at Princess Anne High School. They set up a stage and everything at one end of the football field and the tickets were like two dollars to get in there. Well, I didn't have the two dollars and one of the girls that grew up in my neighborhood was, she was, actually one of my friends, she wasn't like my girlfriend girlfriend, but we were just friends, and you didn't have that when you were in high school. You were either dating somebody, they were your girlfriend girlfriend or they were just somebody you knew. So, she and I went over behind Pembroke, which is Pembroke Meadow now. It wasn't even built. It was a big field over there. We went over to Pembroke Meadows and crept along the swamp and when we got up to the end of the football field where you could see the band, we wanted to get closer, well there was about fifty people in the bushes also so, while we were there and the cops were all walking around with dogs and they knew they were back there waiting for us to sneak in there are they were going to take us and throw us out. So, I got four or five people together and I said, "Spread the word. When I yell one, two, three, everybody take off running. They can't get us all." So, me and this girl, we got mud up to our knees and it was just totally unheard of for a girl to go through the swamp like that especially teenagers. You know girls were always prim, proper and pretty and that kind of stuff and she was one of my cool friends. So, anyhow, we up there and I yell, "One, two, three, Run!" Well, everybody, and she got ready to run and I said, "No, just hold up a minute." Everybody took off running the cops took off after them. Her and I stood up, and walked right in, and watched the concert for free. It was only two bucks, but it was still, the idea that we got in free, that's what was the cool part.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: So . . .

Speaker 1: With all that mud and everything.

Speaker 2: Oh yeah.

Speaker 1: Tell me about the kids. When [WORDS REMOVED] came.

--30 MINUTES--

Speaker 2: [WORD REMOVED], my son, he's the oldest child, when he . . .

Speaker 1: What is his full name?

Speaker 2: [WORDS REMOVED]. And, when he was born ah, I brought both my children home in Cadillacs. My daughter, I brought her home in a Cadillac Limousine, and my son in a Cadillac Seville. And a friend of mine had the Cadillac and I said, "My kids are coming from the hospital in Cadillacs." But anyway, and, so, we, I went and picked up, it's sort of funny that day, cause I forgot to take [WORD REMOVED]'s

clothes so when we, so when she got ready to leave the hospital room the only thing she has was her gown.

Speaker 1: Oh, no.

Speaker 2: Her nightgown. So, anyhow, I took [WORDS REMOVED], my wife, out to the car and we got in the Cadillac so, we, I, at the time I was like ah, sucks, in my thirties so, I said, "Well, we're a we're gonna go to some of the restaurants that our friends own around the beach and watering holes. So, we went to the Beach Pub first, the very first place [WORD REMOVED] ever went . . .

Speaker 1: Where it is now?

Speaker 2: No, no, no, it was the old, the original Beach Pub on thirty -third street which is called Bubbas now.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: And the Beach Pub now is actually up on Laskin Road. So, anyway, we went there and all the waitresses came out and goo-goo, gaa-gaaed over [WORD REMOVED] and everything, and poor [WORD REMOVED] had to stay in the car because she had nothing but a gown. So, anyhow we went on home and then when [WORD REMOVED] was born . . .

Speaker 1: What was the date of [WORDS REMOVED]'s birth?

Speaker 2: You would ask me that. Let's see um.

Speaker 1: What was the year?

Speaker 2: March 31, 1980, so anyway . . .

Speaker 1: And [WORD REMOVED]?

Speaker 2: [WORD REMOVED] was '83, I think, so, [WORD REMOVED]'s 23 so whatever the difference is there.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: But anyway. June the twentieth. Ah [WORD REMOVED], we went to the hospital, and my neighbor owned a limousine service, so he gave me the use of the limousine. He actually drove it for us. So, we pulled up to the hospital and he waited out front and I went inside to get [WORDS REMOVED], and [WORD REMOVED]'s, ah the nurse is getting her stuff together and everything, and [WORD REMOVED] says,

“Where’s [WORD REMOVED]?” And I said, “Well.” I said, “He’s out front.” She said, “Out front with who?” I said, “Well, there was a real nice lady there and I said would you mind watching my son while I go in and get my wife?” She said, “You left him with a perfect stranger?” I said, “Well, she was just standing there smoking a cigarette. She wasn’t going to go anywhere.” So, anyway, we wheeled her down in the wheelchair and as we come out the front door she said, “Where’s [WORD REMOVED], I don’t see him.” Well, [WORDS REMOVED] who was my neighbor and he’s passed away a couple, last year or so, he popped the back window of the limousine down and [WORD REMOVED] stuck his head out the window and said, “Hey, Mom.” And she said, “What’s he doing in the limousine?” And I said, “I got the limousine to bring you and [WORD REMOVED] home.” So the nurse said, “Oh man, that’s really cool.” So, we go out and we get in the limousine and the same thing again we went to some of the restaurants our friends own and stuff to show off my babies and then we came on home. That’s how we brought them both home from the hospital.

Speaker 1: When you talk about this area, where we live, to people who don’t live here, what do you call it? Do you just say, “I live in Virginia Beach? Do you . . .”

Speaker 2: I live, most of the time I tell them I live in Shadowlawn Heights. And I said, “It’s actually near Rudee Inlet.”

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: Or I tell them I live near , at Rude Inlet in Shadowlawn.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: And, if they’re not enough, if it’s, if I’m out of town I say, “I live in Virginia Beach and I live at Rudee Inlet.

Speaker 1: Right. Have you ever gone somewhere out of the area where someone has said something you, you must be from the south. You have an accent or where are you from? You have . . .

Speaker 2: Oh, several times. People ask me if I’m from North Carolina or South Carolina and I say, “No, I’m from Virginia.” Now, once in a while I’ll joke them and tell them I’m from New York or somewhere like that.

Speaker 1: Right. Does that offend you at all? Do you have . . .

Speaker 2: Absolutely not. Nothing. No, it does not.

Speaker 1: Do you feel like you have stereotypes toward . . . do you need to get that?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I'll get it in a second.

Speaker 1: Okay, toward people who have a different way of speaking?

--30 MINUTES--

Speaker 2: No, because ah when I was in the military and it just shows you how silly people can be, I went to ah New York with one of my shipmates for the weekend, and this was in 1966, and his sister who was a young teenager asked me, "Do they have new cars in the south?" And I said, "Yeah, we got the '64 models came in last month. So, and it's just like, we think they're backwards about a lot of things up there and there's a lot of people up there who think we're backwards about things. They have a lot of what you say street smarts and we, back then, had a lot of what country smarts or horse sense.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: See? So, every its, you learn how to survive in the area you're brought up in, in different ways, so . . .

Speaker 1: There we go, oh okay, now we're going.

Speaker 2: Alright.

Speaker 1: Okay, um, when you first moved here, from what it looks like now, what is the biggest change?

Speaker 2: Are you taking about a change in this particular neighborhood, or in Virginia from Norfolk?

Speaker 1: Anything that stands out to you, like new roads or just development in general.

Speaker 2: The the townhouses I guess were the biggest changes that I noticed right off hand. They were sort of sprung up everywhere and it was like uh everything went from townhouses to condos, you know, they were using actually they were just apartments to me. Townhouses were apartments, but then they went to the term condos. Everybody was moving into condos and that sort of stuff and the roads, of course they built ah, they used to be called 44. The main road that ran from Virginia Beach to Norfolk and it cut through a lot of ah farms and that sort of stuff, and basically, the big change was in the the very early sixties there were so many farms in Virginia Beach, but they they became extinct real fast, because money was more lucrative, jobs were more lucrative, and people could borrow money and that sort of stuff a lot easier, and back they and back in the early sixties the developers were building houses that were catered to the middle class or the working class of people uh, cause prior to that um ah, most middle class or working class people lived in apartments and the old apartments in Norfolk and that sort of thing. So,

as they started building more and that sort of stuff and industrial things were coming to the beach and of course your shopping centers – your first major ah shopping mall in Virginia Beach was Pembroke Mall and now they're building Town Centre across from Pembroke Mall – these huge high rise condominium/apartments and that sort of thing. And but I can remember going down Virginia Beach Blvd. from what they called Chinese Corner which is ah actually at Witchduck Road. That used to be ah a automobile race track back in the the ah fifties and early sixties and they tore the race track down and they built this ah discount store called GEX. It's like, it's sort of like what ah Costco or Sam's Club is now, but they didn't they didn't sell food there. It was all ah supposed to be wholesale things like you would buy at Sears or Wal-Mart or somewhere like that.

Speaker 1: Like big appliances?

Speaker 2: Yeah, could buy appliances, stereo equipment, and diamond rings, automotive accessories and that kind of stuff and then they they GEX closed down and then the city of Virginia Beach ah bought that property and they turned it into ah an industrial, um not an industrial, an ah a school ah, you know what it's called, for kids that can't do well in high school, get along in high . . .

Speaker 1: Oh, right, I know what you're talking about.

Speaker 2: But anyway that's what's there now. It was part, but actually, behind the GEX building was the only black school in the city of Virginia Beach, high school, it was called Union Kempsville.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Speaker 2: And that road that's that runs from Witchduck Road up toward Kempsville that was a two lane bumpy road and it didn't, to go to Kempsville, it was all back bumpy road all the way to Kempsville. Cause I would ride a school bus from Aragona.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Up that road to Kempsville Junior High School and Kempsville Meadows.

Speaker 1: Uhha.

Speaker 2: Kempsville Meadows actually set out in the middle of a big cornfield and now it's subdivisions everywhere. Ah, quick story, the first day that I went to Kempsville Meadows we had a major down pour and all around the school was totally flooded. So they called the ducks in from ah Fort Story. The army sent a couple ducks up there, and I don't mean quack quack ducks, these were vehicles that transports people that it's like an amphibian and they would so the school busses stayed out on Princess Anne Road and the ducks would come over to the school, pick us up and carry us out to Princess Anne

Road to catch the bus home. And I remember it was after dark when I got home that day and I hadn't lived in Aragona more than a couple weeks at this time, so I was hoping I caught the right bus. But was really cool, is this girl I went to school with her brother is he's a judge here in Virginia Beach now and he was ah ah with the state senate I believe, a representative, Buster O'Brian his sister was Nancy O'Brian and she and I were climbing up on this duck and this newspaper guys said, "Look this way." We turned around and he took our picture, so that was my claim to fame my first day in the neighborhood and then the school was I was on the front page of the newspaper cause it was on the front page the next day.

--35 MINUTES--

Speaker 1: Do you still have it?

Speaker 2: No, I don't.

Speaker 1: Oh no.

Speaker 2: Oh, but I, I mean I guess you could get it from the library or somewhere like that. Ah, it was in, I want to say, 1960 or '61 maybe somewhere along then, but anyway that was just an event that happened here, and there was a chicken farm across the road from us and then there was Kempsville Golf Course was about the only thing in that part, and Kempsville. Golf Course is still there

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: But that was all farms, as far as you could see.

Speaker 1: When did Oceana open?

Speaker 2: Oceana opened, I want to say opened back in the '30s or 40s' something like that.

Speaker 1: So, this area's always been transient?

Speaker 2: Yes, yes.

Speaker 1: And how did people receive, originally, the changes, with the farms going and the condos and the townhouses?

Speaker 2: Well, it was a gradual thing. It wasn't like all of a sudden BAM there they were.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: They did do some serious building in the '60s. The mid-sixties there was a lot of building going on, ah then, but it was mostly homes for the middle class working people. There were very few custom built homes. You know, and I'm taking about the high-end homes.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Excuse me. I custom built home would run between fifty and seventy-five and a hundred and twenty thousand dollars. That's the homes that are million dollar homes now. And they were usually built out like off of Great Neck Road and ah that's ah down that way.

Speaker 1: So if you were from this area, say the 60s, where was 'the place' to live? If you lived in that place you were doing well.

Speaker 2: Ah, Thalia, behind Willis Wayside, ah Great Neck, ah, off of Great Neck Road, further back. It used to be a place back there called Sea Breeze Farms.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: And they started building pretty heavy back there in the '60s. The, you know, the big money people lived in Princess Anne Hills in Virginia Beach.

Speaker 1: So, not the North End, not on the beach. . .

Speaker 2: No. Princess Anne Hills.

Speaker 1: Not like today.

Speaker 2: Princess Anne Hills and Bay Colony, that was the place, and matter of fact it was really sort of unheard of.

Speaker 1: Really?

Speaker 2: Because there weren't that many houses being built up there.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: But if you were from Princess Anne Hills you, it was serious money there, but the north end of the beach, they were a little just a tad above middle class people living there. There were, that was old money and old families.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: And ah you know, that sort of thing, so . . .

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Ah, I want to say, oh, Great Neck Road ah, see Great Neck Road didn't always go through.

Speaker 1: Oh.

Speaker 2: It was a dead end

Speaker 1: Not to Shore Drive.

Speaker 2: No.

Speaker 1: Where did it stop?

Speaker 2: It stopped ah, Great Neck Estates. When you got to Great Neck Estates it sort of ended right there. You know where Great Neck Estates is?

Speaker 1: Yes.

Speaker 2: That's where it ended, right there. Cause I had a girlfriend that lived in there and I used to sneak away. I was supposed to go to Sunday School and I'd disconnect my father's speedometer and drive the car down there to visit the girl on Sundays for ten or fifteen minutes and blast back to church, hook the speedometer up, pick up my brother and go home.

Speaker 1: Where did you go to church?

Speaker 2: Old Donation Episcopal Church and that's before Independence Blvd. went through there. Ah, Indepen . . . that was all farm. That was a huge strawberry farm. It was the Pembroke Manner before Pembroke Manner ah homes were built there.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: And ah, but let's see, ah Independence Blvd. I want to say was built in the mid '60s through there.

Speaker 1: Okay.

--40 MINUTES--

Speaker 2: And I can't remember exactly when Great Neck Road went all the way through. But, ah, I would probably say in the late '60s.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: The only way to get to say Fort Story, was to go ah, down Shore Drive.

Speaker 1: The long way around?

Speaker 2: The long way around.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Now, there was a back road from the back of Aragona Village to Robin's Corner.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: It was a two-lane road, bumpy, sort of a country road that came by Haygood, Haygood Shopping Center now.

Speaker 1: right.

Speaker 2: That was the back of Aragona. Come down that road, Haygood Road, to ah, the road that went to Pleasure House Road and that's how you got to Shore Drive and when you got to Lynnhaven, ah that Lynnhaven Bridge was built I want to say in the early '60s. That was a draw bridge cause at one time in the very the mid fifties there was actually a train track that went down Shore Drive to ah Fort Story.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Speaker 2: Because when I was in the second, third grade for an outing we would go to Lynnhaven Beach they call it and I can remember swimming there in the Lynnhaven Inlet and there was actually a train that went across, there was a draw bridge there, and when the big yachts, you know the big money would go out from Lynnhaven Inlet they'd have to raise the bridge up so they could get through there.

Speaker 1: Now, that's not there any more?

Speaker 2: No. It's it's the Lesner Bridge there now.

Speaker 1: Oh.

Speaker 2: That's where Duck Inn is. I can remember when Duck Inn was just a little hole in the wall. It was just one building there and all those other, those those condominiums and that sort of stuff that's there now wasn't there there was just a few houses scattered along there. And people the park they would have to pull off of Shore Drive into the sand and every day people got stuck and had to be pulled out or dig out or what have you. But that's how you got to Virginia Beach. And to get from Virginia Beach to Norfolk you had to go up ah Laskin Road and pick up Virginia Beach Blvd. at London Bridge or 17th Street to Virginia Beach Blvd.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: To London Bridge that way, so, and that's where Great Neck Road intersects right there at London Bridge.

Speaker 1: Right. Right.

Speaker 2: So, ah, I'm just trying to think. Seashore State Park was there as long as I can remember and it was great place to go. The sand dunes, the trees were the best climbing trees in the world so . . .

Speaker 1: They still are. Now, did you have a favorite teacher?

Speaker 2: Ah, I'm just trying to, ah, I have to think about it because I had, most of my teachers I really got along with. Most of my teachers liked me, ah in the aspect that I, I didn't stir up trouble but I didn't study like I should have studied and ah,

Speaker 1: But none that really influences you or you really clicked with?

Speaker 2: There was there was one that I clicked with, her name was [WORDS REMOVED] was her name. She died a few years ago. Ah, she was my 8th grade, 7th 8th grade teacher and she went to my church and a neat story is when my son was going to Parish Day School she was a member of that church, my grandmother, that was the family church, ah and anyway

Speaker 1: Were they buried there?

Speaker 2: Excuse me?

Speaker 1: Are they buried there?

Speaker 2: Yes, my grandmother, grandfather, and my mother and some of my uncles and aunts and buried back there.

Speaker 1: Not your dad?

Speaker 2: My dad? No. Ah, anyway, she I went there to pick up my son one day from preschool, I guess that's what they call it now, but anyway, and she was in there doing something something with the church and I hadn't seen her in about fifteen years and I had my son, he was like three, three or four, three years old and I was carrying, I take that back, I was carrying my daughter and I went to pick up my son cause I had my daughter at the time and I stopped her and I said, "[WORDS REMOVED], do you remember me?" And she looked at me and she said, "[WORDS REMOVED]. She said, "Ya'll come here, this is one of my boys." Well, I'm a grown man, I'm thirty some odd years old. She said, "This is one of my boys." And ah, she ah, and I said, "Well, these are my children." She, she, she just went crazy. She said, "This is unbelievable. I'd a never thought in a million years."

--45 MINUTES--

Speaker 1: So, your teachers called you Joker?

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Did your brother's have nicknames?

Speaker 2: No.

Speaker 1: Now, let me ask you, when you or your brothers would answer the phone, people calling for you, would they get you your voices confused or were you very distinct?

Speaker 2: No, because of the age difference. Once in a while my my my middle brother, the one next to me, they would get you know him confused you know with me sometimes, but, and a lot of times, speaking of that particular thing, when somebody would call and my grandmother would answer the phone and that they didn't know that my family called me Joker they just thought it was a nickname outside of the house and they'd say, "May I speak to [WORD REMOVED]?" And my grandmother'd say, "Who?" And they'd say, "[WORD REMOVED]." She'd say, "You mean Joker." And they'd say, "Yeah, Joker." She'd say, "He's not here or whatever." You know. And, and people'd say, "They call you Joker at home too?" And I'd say, "Yeah." I'd say, "That's what my family's called me for you know my whole life so.

Speaker 1: Do you think, can you think back to the way that your mom and dad sounded when they spoke? Do you think that you speak more similarly to your family or friends?

Speaker 2: More like my father.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Speaker 2: Ah, they say my voice is a lot like his, and ah, but no that's yeah I'm more, unfortunately, I'm more like my father.

Speaker 1: Did the kids have, do they sound similar to you? When [WORD REMOVED] would answer the phone as his voice changed, would people get the two of you confused or is he distinct?

Speaker 2: Ah, he's distinct. Both of them are actually.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: There ah, nothing nothing like my voice. My daughter's like me in character but ah, in a lot of ways, but . . .

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: They got their own, their own self . . .

Speaker 1: Right. And I know you said that your parents were alcoholics. Your grandmother and your parents do you think they have a particular influence on you like how you acted or the choices that you made as you were growing up?

Speaker 2: My grandmother did.

Speaker 1: How?

Speaker 2: She was absolutely incredible. She was, the horse sense, my grandmother had a knack about, she could talk to someone in a few minutes and she would if they walked away or something she'd say something to the effect, "You know Joker, you watch them. They're up to no good." And she was usually right on the money.

Speaker 1: She was a good judge of character?

Speaker 2: Very good judge of character and she had she was extremely intelligent although she I think she only got through got to junior high school. I don't think she got past junior high school.

Speaker 1: What was her name?

Speaker 2: [WORDS REMOVED]. She was a [WORD REMOVED]. Ah, her maiden name was [WORD REMOVED] and my grandfather called her [WORD REMOVED]. And my grandfather was [WORDS REMOVED] and he was from Portsmouth.

Speaker 1: And did they instill in you manners? Did you all say, “Yes sir and no sir?”

Speaker 2: Absolutely not. There were no manners ah for some reason or another, I’ve still not figured this out, but as I went started through life I would watch other people and unfortunately I would watch people with ah I want to say money, and and the and the ah oh the I I hate to say it like this but it’s the only way I can describe it off the top of my, the higher class people.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: And and I watched them ah because there were absolutely no manners at my house. My my my my parents would finish eating dinner and light cigarettes at dinner, I mean after dinner and flip their ashes in their plate. Ah, my father would eat with his and chomp his food and cram, and my grandfather was the same way. My grandfather, this is sort of funny but it’s not. Ah, he would cram so much food in his mouth, his jaws would puff up and then he’d start choking and everybody would duck under the table cause when he coughed it would go everywhere. And I know that sounds gross but it’s the truth. I mean I can remember times when I’d be like, “ Oh, Lord.” Cause it would go. Then my grandmother would start chewing him out at the table and that was something, there was, we never sat down and had a meal when there wasn’t an argument but, as for manners, in answer to your question, I knew, I think instinctively, there was a better way. There had to be a better way than that and it wasn’t right.

--50 MINUTES--

Speaker 1: Uhum.

Speaker 2: And there were times if I went and had dinner with someone or whatever that were more polished, ah I sort of would take my time and watch them and see how they’d do things, and ah because my first wife her family they they they were very comfortable financially and I sort of watched them in a way, but then again they had a very crude side to them also, now that I look back on it. And ah my ex-father-in-law and my ex-mother-in-law they were raised in the country on the outskirts of Richmond, Virginia. My ex-mother-in-law was Miss. Richmond, I want to say, 1944, maybe, or something like that, but anyhow, my ex-father-in-law came to Virginia Beach and opened up a hardware store.

Speaker 1: Okay. We have to start again, okay, um, considering your background with manners did you go out of your way to instill them in your own children?

Speaker 2: Yes I did. I I tried to explain to my children and all young people I deal with that good manner will open a lot of doors for you and ah, that’s, I’ve sort of kinda stuck by that and I’ve noticed please and thank you’s and that type of manner and also please and thank you and just being genuinely courteous is good manners in my opinion. And when you’re courteous and nice to someone they’ll do something nice for you.

Speaker 1: Uhm. Do you feel like kids come out they way they're going to be? I mean how much influence do you think that parents or neighbors or someone significant has on how children grow up and maintain themselves and strive for whatever they're going to be.

Speaker 2: Well.

Speaker 1: Take [WORD REMOVED] for example, I mean did she come out being really feisty?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Yes.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: And so, do you feel like you had an impact, I mean I'm sure you had an influence on her, but how much of that was innate, part of her?

Speaker 2: Ah, I think it was maybe I want to say, ten percent of her natural born character, everything else ah, she sort of developed along the way from watching other people and that sort of stuff, uhm . . .

Speaker 1: What is your favorite thing about [WORD REMOVED]?

Speaker 2: How she can make people laugh and ah, her charisma with young children. [WORD REMOVED] can take a a a young person that's got a major attitude or a spoiled rotten brat or this sort of thing and just a genuine mean kid and melt them right down. She's she's got this charisma. And I tell her a lot of times, I say, "[WORD REMOVED], you've got charisma with a young child. You can you can influence their life in so many ways," and I said, "That's a gift." And she'll say, "Yeah Dad, I know. That's a gift." She's real nonchalant about it. But ah, in answer to your question about your kids having, being influenced, there's a lot of times it's not a disrespectful thing, but say one of your boys because they like me, or like my character, or like the way I do something or like the fact that somebody else likes me, or something like that, they can feel the same way and they might listen to me before they would listen to you.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: And it's not because they don't respect you or anything like that, but it's just because how they feel then or how they trust sort of thing, you know. And a lot of times ah, when when when somebody is is trying to find the right way or whatever, if they trust somebody they're going to listen to them, and sometimes that's not good because that person may be telling the wrong thing.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: But, ah, but, your children, you can do everything right, you can show them the right way, and I've said this a million times, as a parent, your biggest ah competition when you're raising your children is peer pressure. And if your kids love you and respect you they'll do and eventually they'll figure out they're telling me right. If you can do all the right things and it just it just, sometimes it doesn't happen.

Speaker 1: Did [WORD REMOVED] every have any serious problems with peer pressure, where he would come to you, or you knew he was dealing with something?

Speaker 2: Ah, not really. There was a couple time he was, I could tell he was confused about something, or in doubt about something, and I was sort of, sort, he would figure it out on his own. [WORD REMOVED] was very very smart child, and ah, although when he got to college, you know, it's like a friend of mine said, well, I used to say this when my kids were teenagers, I said, "When my kids became teenagers, I became the stupidest person in the neighborhood." I said, "And now they're out of college and all of a sudden I'm starting to get smart again." And that's you know, ah, of course [WORD REMOVED] you know she knows it all. I mean ah, it's like the bumper sticker says: Hire a teenager – they know everything! So . . .

--55 MINUTES--

Speaker 1: What do you think about, there seems to have been a transition from most children calling adults [WORDS REMOVED] or whatever, and that's kind of faded away. People are calling adults Mr. Joker or just Joker,

Speaker 2: Yeah well, that you know what the reason it's faded away because their parents didn't lighten them up on it.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: It's like when I was raised with no manners I learned manners from someone else. If my parents would have taught me manners from day one, I would have known manners but they never it was never a priority in my house to to to do the manners thing. Ah, I was never required to say yes ma'am, no ma'am and ah and that's the way it is now. A lot of people are instilling in their children it's good to say yes ma'am, no ma'am, no ma'am, please, and thank you.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Where as I think if if if we went back to some of our old values and that's the problem also, I feel like it's it's just my opinion with the world situation now is there's

not enough family values instilled in our family's, you know. Your grown ups are too involved in their social life you know? When I was coming along socially, you did things with your family even though it wasn't such a good situation, you did a lot of things with your family.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: Fortunately, I live in a neighborhood now where that's number one.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: I'm very very fortunate. Ah, I'm not financially rich, but I'm filthy rich in other ways.

Speaker 1: Is there anything that your grandmother used to say to you or your parents and at the time, when you were younger and hearing it didn't make sense but now that your a dad or a little bit older, you say, "Oh, that's what they were talking about. I get it now."

Speaker 2: Absolutely, absolutely. There were there were things that my grandmother would tell me about people and life and this sort of thing and now it it comes to light now. I mean it has for years actually.

Speaker 1: Right. Anything in particular that they said, or . . . ?

Speaker 2: No, I don't know if this is on the same lines, when my grandmother was teaching me to cook, this is sort of what you're talking about, she would be in in in front of her stove and she'd say, "Joker," and that's how she'd say, she'd say, "Joker, you get over here next to me. I want you to see how I do this because I'm not always going to be here to do it for you." She said, "And nobody's going to take care of you. You got to learn how to take care of yourself." And that was, that was a some of the things I remember, you know.

Speaker 1: Are there any life lessons that you hope [WORD REMOVED] and [WORD REMOVED] would either here or see from you? That long in the future when you and [WORD REMOVED] aren't here and [WORD REMOVED] and [WORD REMOVED] are here with their children and their older that you hope that they, "Oh, my dad said or did this . . ."

Speaker 2: Well, I hope that they look beyond their feelings toward people. In other words, just because they're in love with somebody just makes you know think in the back of your mind you know this is not, there's more to it than just this. There's there's more to things than what actually appears if you really look deep into it. That's, that's the only way I can sort of describe it.

Speaker 1: What do you think the key is to you and [WORD REMOVED] being together for so long?

Speaker 2: We talk about things, ah, if things are starting to bother me, instead of letting them get too far, we stop, we talk about it and we don't talk about it in an argument, in other words, if we're sitting here I'll say, "Let's turn the television off or let's turn, I want to talk to you about something. There's something bothering me and I want you to know about it." I said, "If it makes you upset, at least you know about it."

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: And, and you'll be looking for it." That's one thing, another thing is, we tell each other every single day, that we love each other, four or five times a day, sometimes.

Speaker 1: What is her biggest pet peeve about you?

Speaker 2: My looks. Women are all after me. No, I'm just kidding, ah, I guess I procrastinate about different things, or put things off.

Speaker 1: Do you have any pet peeves about what she does?

Speaker 2: She doesn't put things away.

Speaker 1: Now, tell me about your cars. When did you get interested?

Speaker 2: Ah, the day I was born. My uncle said, that when I came out of my mother's womb, I must have been thinking automobile, because ah, when I was two or three years old, they lined up all my toy cars, every single, even the little tiny ones, and I had like fifty-seven cars or something like that lined up across down the wall, like a traffic jam.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: And ah, but I've always, cars have been just, that's my passion.

Speaker 1: What's your favorite car that you have had so far?

Speaker 2: The one I have now, the 1932 Ford, two-door sedan.

Speaker 1: Is that the red, the red truck?

Speaker 2: The black one.

Speaker 1: Oh, the black one.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 1: And then if you could have any car?

Speaker 2: Any car, it would be a 1932 Ford, three window coupe.

Speaker 1: What color?

Speaker 2: Black.

--60 MINUTES--