

Nevada Test Site Oral History Project
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Interview with
Dina Titus

September 28, 2004
Las Vegas, Nevada

Interview Conducted By
Shannon Applegate

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[00:00:00] Begin Track 3, Disc 1.

Shannon Applegate: *Just some background.*

Dina Titus: My name is Dina Titus. I came to teach at UNLV [University of Nevada, Las Vegas] in 1977. I am in the Political Science Department. While there, I participated in a program that was known as a faculty internship, and it was a great program. You got to go back to Washington and spend the semester working for a member of Congress. I went in 1982 to work in Senator Howard Cannon's office in Washington, and this was the time when the whole issue of atomic compensation and Downwinders was *just* getting on the political agenda nationally. Senator Cannon said, *Here, look into this. Do some research on this for me. See which way I need to go on it. And the more I looked into it for him, the more I became fascinated with the story, because there were a lot of elements there that were good political science, but there are also a lot of elements that make a good story. There's political intrigue, there's human tragedy, it's a morality play, good versus evil, little guy versus big government. So the more I looked, the more fascinated I became, and the research I did for him eventually turned into a book, and has had lots of spin-offs from there. [Titus, A. Costandina. *Bombs in the Backyard: Atomic Testing and American Politics*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1986, 2nd. ed. 2001].*

Now when you did that, were you living in Washington?

I did. I went to Washington and rented an apartment; spent the whole semester. My husband Tom went with me, and a cat, and we drove across country in a [Triumph] TR6, and then spent a

semester. It was great. It was the best of both worlds because you got to be involved in all the political things on the Hill, but you didn't really have the pressure of knowing that that's your career or living there full time.

And how did you like Senator Cannon?

I love Howard Cannon. I just think he was a great Nevadan. I think he's an unsung hero. History's going to look at him much more favorably. He was Mr. Aviation. He was a very senior member when he got defeated. He brought a lot to the state. I would like to do a political biography of Howard at some time in the future.

Really? So he was pretty helpful and opened doors. Now were you intimidated with coming to him with things? What was his position on the stuff that you were finding?

Well, he was torn for a number of reasons. One is he is Mormon and he's from Southern Utah, so he was sympathetic to that community that made up most of the Downwinders. On the other hand, he was a real pro-defense kind of guy. He was a hawk as a Democrat. He was a war hero from World War II. He was in *The Bridge Too Far* that they just celebrated the anniversary for, and was behind enemy lines for a month or so. So he didn't want to jeopardize national security or defense. Also, representing Nevada, he saw the test site as a real source of economic development—good jobs, steady payroll, diversifying the economy—so he didn't want to necessarily jeopardize that either. And as a good long-time politician, it's hard to ever admit government made a mistake. So you roll that all into one, and he had to think about it. But bottom line is he wanted to do the right thing, get at the bottom of it and try to find some compensation for people who he felt had been harmed.

And what was your exposure like, going into this research? Had you heard of the test site? Did you have a position on nuclear weapons testing or—?

Well, I certainly had heard of the test site and had studied about it and the Cold War, studying political science, but I don't think I had formed a real strong opinion on it. It was just part of life here in Southern Nevada. I found it fascinating from a popular culture standpoint because then you could still see some remnants of it around, like Atomic Liquors and some of the street names and things like that. After I got interested in it for him, I also developed a class on atomic testing and I teach that in the summers and take a trip out to the test site. It's fascinating to see students who have no idea that this is just down the road, and of course it's from a remote time that they're not familiar with, and so it's a real eye opener for some of them.

But did you have a stance either way as far as weapons?

Well, I'm sure I would have been opposed to continuing testing out there. After you have so many bombs and you test them so many times, just how much do you need? And certainly the more I researched it, the more I realized that this was a classic case of government setting one priority and then ignoring any objections to that priority, and that's what they did. National security, winning the Cold War, winning the arms race against the Soviet Union, made them put [00:05:00] all health considerations aside, and that becomes very clear in all the research.

And did this experience, did it encourage you to get involved in politics? I mean had you always wanted to be involved in politics, or was this a catalyst?

Well, I'm from a political family and I studied politics. I must be a political junkie or I wouldn't have gone in that direction anyway. So I don't know. I think it probably reinforced some natural tendencies that were already there.

Did you learn things from Senator Cannon like the inner workings of the Hill and how that actually works?

Yes. He was like a mentor to me. I miss him very much. He died not too long ago. He had the very first fundraiser for me when I ran for office, and people said that was unusual, that Howard Cannon never did that. I have great respect for him. I had a special status as a faculty intern, because I got to do a lot of things but I got treated a little better than a student intern did. And he would always take time to sit down and just talk to me about politics. I remember helping go through his letters here. He gave all his papers to the UNLV Library Special Collections, and I helped them catalog them. There was one thing I found really interesting. He had something called the "Nut File," and all of the wacko letters that he got were put in the Nut File. And I thought that was kind of strange and funny, but having been in politics myself, I realize there is a need for a Nut File out there. I have kept one myself.

So you have a legacy from Senator Cannon and it's the Nut File.

There are other things, too, but that was one specifically.

So where did you do most of your research?

I did it in the National Archives, the old AEC [Atomic Energy Commission] papers out of the National Archives in Washington. Did a lot of newspaper research. At that time, *so* much of it was classified. That was before Hazel O'Leary took over the Department of Energy [DOE] and opened up more records. I remember using the Freedom of Information Act one time to request some internal documents from the AEC and they sent them to me all right, but they were still classified, so they charged me, I think, two dollars a page to copy them, and they came back [with] everything blacked out except the "and"s and the "the"s so they weren't very helpful. I tell you something else I've learned, though, being in politics, when you depend just on newspaper accounts, sometimes you are *not* getting the whole story. And so I now look back on some of

those things I *relied* on for information and I realize that in some instances that was just the tip of the iceberg. Did a lot of interviews also.

Oh, you did? Were people pretty willing to talk?

The DOE wasn't. They figured if you were questioning anything they did, then that made you the enemy. They've gotten better about that over the years. Downwinders, some of them wanted to talk, some of them wanted to forget that period. It just depends on that whole notion of memory, how people deal with it. A lot of secondary research, too, though, because there are some good books out about the Manhattan Project and the day of Trinity, so it was a lot of reading of some of those original accounts.

Were you real conscious when you'd go into an interview, talking, knowing—I guess what I'm asking is when you'd go into an interview like with a DOE person or a Downwinder, did you phrase your questions in a certain way so that you wouldn't come across as being biased on the issue, or—?

Well, I tried very hard to write a book that wouldn't be seen as a screed against the government. There were a number of books that came out around this same period, a lot of them written by journalists, a lot of them taking one side or the other. I hoped that this would be an academic book that would *be* objective. Now, of course, your own prejudices will come through, and like I said, if you criticized the DOE, even *questioned* the DOE, they saw you in the other camp. But I think time has shown that I *did* do a pretty good job of giving a balanced view of what was going on.

Were you self-conscious in the interviews, though, to really present yourself in an unbiased manner?

I think I tried very hard to do that, I'm still doing that, because I'm still dealing with the DOE. I'm still teaching a class, and just last week I went to Cedar City [Utah] to speak to the Convocation Series, to the school there, and a lot of Downwinders [were] in the audience. And when I'm talking about atomic issues, I just want to have a certain sensitivity to people's own relation to the whole story and whole situation.

Did you ever hear any real sad Downwinder accounts?

Oh, some of those stories just break your heart. Childhood leukemias, loss of sheep, four members of one family gone to cancer, and of course they all attribute it to that [00:10:00] radioactive fallout, and you think, Yes, they deserve to be compensated, but how much compensation could *ever* make up for some of the things that they've been through? So those are tough stories.

Were you able to distance yourself or was it—?

Well, the book that I wrote just had a couple of chapters that focused specifically on Downwinders, so if I had done the whole story of just the Downwinders, it might've been harder. There've been a couple of books. [Howard] Ball has a book—he teaches at the law school in Utah—called *Justice Downwind : [America's Atomic Testing Program in the 1950s*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986]. He is *from* Utah and I think had some family and so that kind of story would've been much tougher to write, I believe.

And so it sounds like you got into it through this faculty internship.

Yes.

Do you think you would've been drawn to this topic had that not happened or—?

Well, I think it's possible, but that was such an opportunity to look at it from the inside. If I had just found it interesting as a faculty member, I would have had a harder time doing the research, I

think, because getting access to the information would have taken longer, been more of a challenge.

And how do you balance the information you got? Because it sounds like Senator Cannon was a proponent for the test site, is that—?

Yes.

But there were some really negative things that happened there and happened to people and that's coming out. So, I guess when I'm doing these interviews, you see it as this great source of jobs, economics for Nevada, but yet it had such adverse effects

Well, a couple of things. One is it wasn't just jobs for Nevada. People were supportive of the test site because they saw us as defending democracy. The mentality in the fifties and sixties, when it came to the arms race and the Cold War, was very different from today, and also people were very much more trusting of government then than they are today. The DOE has very little credibility now because of some of the things we know that they did then, but at the time we believed them. We thought that they could keep us safe. So I think some people today—it sounds kind of schizophrenic, but I think you really can rationalize it. Protecting democracy was a good thing to do. You have respect for the people who were involved, but they made some bad decisions and therefore you should make up for those mistakes. So you don't necessarily condemn the whole notion of an arms race because bad decisions were made and people were harmed, but you also cannot forgive the harm that was done simply because you were able to win an arms race.

Where do you think the breakdown happened? You know—or do you think a breakdown happened?

Well, I'm not sure I'd call it a breakdown, but I think the problem was that everything else became secondary to winning the arms race, and so *everything* became a justification for staying ahead of the Russians. And I *do* believe that the government misled the public into how imminent the danger was. They misled the public by suggesting that radiation couldn't hurt you and the public didn't have any information to show that it could. They misled the public into thinking, yes, we'll have these weapons and we can destroy the enemy, but *you'll* be safe here at home. So there was misinformation, but it was just one of those things that fed on itself because *this* was the overriding prerogative. And I think the people who made those decisions felt like, Well, if a few people get harmed, it's worth it. And that's why Downwinders see themselves as the sacrificial lambs in all of this; human guinea pigs: Yes, well, we got a few Downwinders and a few test site workers and a few soldiers, but look what we accomplished. And I think that's the danger. If you take that attitude, then you'll *never* support compensation, and that's wrong.

So do you think—because some of the people that we talked to that were in the military, they really see themselves as veterans of a war, veterans of the Cold War. Do you think that that's an accurate way of looking at it? Do you think that that really was a war zone in more of an abstract notion? The test site?

Well, they certainly played war *games* out there and the soldiers were out there preparing in case we ever had to *use* a nuclear weapon in a war situation. I'm not sure they ever thought they'd really have to. It was all based on deterrence. But certainly if you were out there in those trenches and marching towards that explosion, I'm sure you had heard a lot of speeches and a lot of indoctrination of why you were doing that and why it was good for the country and good for democracy.

And do you think that what happened at the test site was winning the Cold War, was the reason why Russia collapsed?

[00:15:00] Well, I think Russia [USSR] collapsed because its economy put too much money into the development of military and not enough into the development of the social and health and food side, job side, of the coin. But certainly it's hard to argue that that whole agenda for almost fifty years was invalid. Now some people might say, *Yes, well, you had that big deterrent.* We never had a big war but we had an awful lot of little wars during that time, if you look at Korea and look at Vietnam and look at the Dominican Republic and places like that. So was it a deterrent to war? Generally, no. Did it help to keep the Soviet Union in check? Maybe. Now I get in these debates with Troy Wade a lot, and he's the ultimate Cold Warrior, so he certainly thinks so. He questions my skepticism. That's why he thinks they should start testing again. I'm *very* much opposed to that.

Oh, really? So there are some hawks out there that would really like to see—?

Oh, yes. In fact, the Bush administration has shortened the readiness period from three years to one year, and that's a very scary thing. I don't think the people of Nevada would be as supportive of testing out there in their back yards today as they were fifty years ago. So it'll be interesting if they push for that, what the public reaction will be here.

Right. Well, especially with what's going on with Yucca Mountain.

Right.

And you have so many more people moving in that are of a more liberal mindset.

Yes.

But one thing that I was going to ask you, too, is how do you balance your role at the [Atomic Testing] museum—? Well, first of all, what do you see your role being there?

Well, two things. I think that, corny as it sounds, we do learn from history, and you have to learn from history so you don't repeat your mistakes. That's why I think it's very important that we bring all those records here. They belong in Nevada. Now they're scattered around at the AEC, the archives, everywhere. They should be here because they're part of our past. And they should be in one place where they're accessible, where the public can get to them, where news people can, historians, scholars. We need that information available so that we can study it and learn from it. And a museum will also let the public see what the story was.

The second part of my role, I think, is keeping them honest. I want them to be sure that they tell both sides of the story and it doesn't become a museum just to glorify testing, but rather to put it in a proper perspective. I think that that will happen because we got Smithsonian designation, and I don't think the Smithsonian will let them get too far afield. But I like the role that I play there as kind of a safety check to keep that from happening.

So you're watching the agenda.

Right, and I had a part in the setting up of the exhibits and some of the documentaries that are going in there. So I think it's wonderful that we have it and we preserve it, and I support it, but I want it to be an accurate representation.

And how did you get involved with the museum?

Well, I've known these people for a long time. Usually it's from the other side of the table. And when they created the [Nevada Test Site] Historical Foundation board, they invited me to come to some meetings and I got on the board. And then the big move was towards a museum, and so I was happy to sponsor the bill in the legislature that allowed for the construction of that building; that allowed for a lend-lease kind of arrangement with DOE through the GAO [Government Accounting Office], and now we have that building. I have a collection of some memorabilia

myself that I've been willing to share. And I'm just pleased to be involved with it. I *did* introduce a bill to do a special *license* plate, though, to get a little extra *money* for the museum. That turned out to be *extremely* controversial. They did an art contest to see what the design would look like. I wasn't on the committee, but they chose a mushroom cloud for the contest winner, to be the license plate. Well, this made *international* news. I got a call from the BBC [British Broadcasting Center]. It was *all* around the country, and people were calling and saying, *How can you do this? A mushroom cloud. And you're supposed to be a critic. How can you possibly do that?* I was even in Greece on the beach and my husband was reading the *International Herald Tribune* and he said, *You're not going to believe this. Here's the story about your license plate. And it is a pretty bizarre thing. And they've not gone forward with that design. I think they may redesign it. But it would certainly be an attention-getter, if you had a mushroom cloud on it.*

How did you answer your critics that said, How could you—?

[00:20:00] Well, the thing about the mushroom cloud, and this is a whole kind of sideline of my research, is that it's become a part of popular culture, and it used to be a symbol of something really scary and awesome and evil. And over time, and this is very ironic, it has become a nostalgic icon of safer times, if that seems possible. But I say that because, we were safer because we knew who the enemy was, we thought we could beat them, we had the weapons. Now, we *don't* know who the enemy is, and how do you defend against a suicide bomber? So people look back nostalgically at the fifties, and that mushroom cloud now doesn't have the same connotation to *most* people in *this* country. Now this is a very specific American phenomenon. Other places, it's still seen for its evil ways, but in this country, you can buy earrings with mushroom clouds, you can buy T-shirts, you've got record jackets with mushroom clouds. So it's moved to a new status as this "nostalgic kitsch," is what I call it.

I guess one thing that's perplexed me about this project is the mushroom cloud and what it represents, and we're organizing brochures and things like that, and I just have this inclination not to want it on anything.

Right.

Do you think that we as a society, Americans, become more callous to what it really means, and do you think that that's a bad thing and—?

Well, we're jaded, maybe callous. Maybe the new generations have forgotten that we are the only country that's ever dropped an atomic bomb on somebody else. And you know all the pictures were of the mushroom cloud, not of the damage on the ground. People don't like to look at pictures of people who were burned. But the mushroom cloud, [they think] oh, that's a pretty thing, that's a real different kind of image. What worries me is when something becomes too acceptable and too unscary, then it becomes too easy for forces to use that; we slip into complacency, and this is a very dangerous time in history. I don't think we can afford to be complacent, but that may be just what's happening.

*I've only been living in Nevada now for a year-and-a-half, so when I found out about the test site, I was like, *Wow, no way!* I had no idea. Do you think that the location of the test site, if you look at it on the map, do you think that had a factor in how Nevada—do you think it stunted Nevada's growth?*

Well, they picked Nevada because of the geology, because it was an area that the federal government already owned, it was a low population. Who would've ever dreamed you'd have this population sixty-five miles down the road in Las Vegas at the time that they put it there? Also, they put it there because you had popular support for it from local officials. You know the governor at the time, [Charles H.] Russell, said, *Now the desert is blooming with atoms.*

It was the attitude that the desert was a wasteland and this was a good way to use it. And then of course the casinos capitalized on it. They packed picnic lunches, they had beauty contests, and so it became kind of a tourist attraction. So the reason they picked it was that it was—well, another thing. You know risk, the concept of risk, and who was willing to live with risk? They figured that Nevadans must not mind risk. One thing, you live in the desert, and two, your entire economy is based on gambling, and what is that if not risk? So all of that went into the consideration of putting it out there. Has that made a difference in how we've developed? It shaped our economy, shaped our politics, shaped our culture, but I don't think it kept people from moving here. And, well, for one thing, people didn't know what was happening out there. Once it moved underground, it was kind of out of sight, out of mind. If they start testing *again*, then it could have some interesting consequences.

Right, because you just see how the sprawl is going right now, there's no way the sprawl can really go out that way and—

No, but it goes as far now as the cutoff to Mount Charleston. Who would've ever thought you'd have houses all the way out there?

Right. And then there's just not a main freeway connecting Reno, so I had wondered if that was a factor that maybe the government discouraged—

Well, that road that goes from here to Reno goes right by Mercury, by the test site. Now, it was a two-lane road, so they had so many accidents out there with people traveling back and forth to the test site that you got the old AEC to fund a widening of the road that was called the Widowmaker. Then it became four lanes wide and now it's not so bad. But, you know, I don't [00:25:00] know. I think a bigger factor is that the federal government owns 87 percent of the land, so there's just not a lot that you can put out there on that federal land.

Right. And then the one thing I was going to ask you—oh, the early politics involved. There were a lot of Democrats in power at the time. So they just saw the test site as bringing in jobs?

Right.

The environment really wasn't a factor?

No, but environmental issues are very new to Nevada—very new to the West—because we were always seen as this land of bountiful resources and so there was plenty of gold, plenty of lumber, plenty of open space, plenty of water. Well, that's turned out not to be the case. So

environmental issues have come late to the West, and especially late to Nevada. And supporting the test site was not partisan. Both parties were very supportive of having the test site here.

Russell was a Republican. Then you had Democrat [Pat] McCarran, who was a big anticommunist, friend of [Joseph P.] McCarthy. So it was not partisan.

Right, because didn't McCarran do the—he was on the appropriations committee, wasn't he, during this time?

Yes, but the McCarran Act was an anticommunist act and so it looked—[he was] good friends with Joe McCarthy and all that Red Scare stuff.

Now, see, that seems counterintuitive that a Democrat would be in the arena—

Well, Democrats from Nevada during that time were pretty conservative Democrats. Howard Cannon was pretty conservative. [Alan] Bible was conservative. Grant Sawyer was fairly conservative except when it came to desegregation. [Mike] O'Callaghan was pretty conservative.

So they didn't see that in the traditional partisan things that we see today. They were strong defense. Democrats from that generation, out of World War II, were still strong on defense, strong on anticommunist, so they might vote for social programs on the one hand, but they weren't going against the test site on the other.

Right, so that's why when I reading this stuff, it just seems so flipped. I'm expecting them to say they're Republican, because from my generation, if you're a Democrat, you're—well, especially being from California, you are very pro-environment, pro-freedom, all of this stuff, so I thought that that was interesting. So this has always been—this state has been very conservative, but liberal in the sense that union is really big here, jobs are big.

Well, Nevada's politics are kind of interesting, kind of schizophrenic, too. Most people who just look at Nevada on the surface think we must be very liberal, anything goes, what happens here stays here. But the truth is we didn't pass the Equal Rights Amendment. We have a big Mormon population. Big Catholic population. Very fiscally conservative. All of those kinds of things that make it hard to pinpoint. I guess that leads us down the road to being sort of libertarian, is what it amounts to.

And as far as weapons testing goes, do you think that we should've done the atmospheric testing? I mean—

Well, you can't look back and second-guess that. I think we should've been more *honest* about it if we were going to do it. Certainly not putting people in harm's way, like the people in Bikini and Enewetak, and then certainly downwind of the NTS. Now that's gone from Utah to including some people in Idaho as well. That's not the kind of decision you can make in retrospect. You can only look at how they did it *wrong* once they made that decision to do it.

And so how do you decide who was affected by it? I mean because that's the one thing that's so difficult, is that cancer is such a horrible disease and these people have suffered such a loss that sometimes they have to point to something to say that that was it, but that may not necessarily be it, but it may. I mean it's just such a gray—

Well, and that was part of the problem with all these people when it came to court cases. You know originally they thought that they would get justice through the courts, but the courts kept saying, well, we'd like to help you but the law says—And they would never rule against the law. One of the problems was proving that the radiation actually caused their cancer, because you can get cancer from a lot of other sources that doesn't look any different from that caused by radiation. And they had to depend on what they call radio epidemiological evidence, statistically showing that the likelihood was greater that you got it from radiation than not because of these cluster patterns. The court often wouldn't recognize that. The statute of limitations would often run out before people's illnesses even kicked in because there's a long [00:30:00] latency period. That was another kind of problem. No records were left in many cases to prove where people were or what dosages were. That was another problem. And that's why eventually these people got justice through Congress and *not* through the courts, and it took legislation to just establish that this was non-rebuttable. It was *presumed* that if you were there, that's what was causing your illness, and you could be compensated. Some groups are easier to compensate than others. Those at Bikini Atoll, that's a distinct population in a certain place at a certain time. Downwinders are harder because they could be all over the place. Soldiers are easier because you can identify them better. Miners, a little bit harder. So you know it just depends on what the circumstances are of a particular group. The last legislation passed under the Clinton administration included almost *everybody* who has been involved in the nuclear weapons industry at any level in the country, and I think it includes fifteen illnesses that you can qualify for.

Now as a Nevada politician, if President Bush said, we want to start testing there again. We want to resume testing, could you say no?

Well, I couldn't stop it but it's like Yucca Mountain. You can certainly put up a resistance, and I certainly would. I don't know what the polls would show, if people think we should test or not. But sometimes when you're in politics there are some things that you just don't go with the polls, you have to go with your own principles, and that's one. I think we have enough weapons. I think you can do other things to tell if they're reliable. And even if we *had* these weapons, who would we drop them on? Would we start another world war? And how do you use testing to defend, like I said, against suicide bombs? Plus I feel like we won the Cold War. Why do we need to start it all over again?

Right. And then how do you—did you read anything about the Enola Gay controversy?

Yes.

What's your opinion on revisionist history? You know how now we're looking back on dropping the bomb and there's new data coming out that maybe [Harry S.] Truman didn't have to do this.

How do you think that affects the test site?

Well, when you talk about the end of World War II, *most* people still believe that they should have dropped that first bomb, that that helped to end the war. The *real* controversy is over the *second* bomb. Did you really need to drop a second bomb? The war was over. Japan was devastated. Why did we drop a second bomb? And that answer was not a war answer. That was a political answer. You dropped the second one to let people know you had more than one, and also to establish your position *vis a vis* the Soviet Union as you moved into a postwar division of power. So I think that's a bigger debate, the second bomb and not the first.

Right. Do you expect any kind of controversy like that surrounding the museum? Do you think people are going to start—once the museum opens, that maybe they're not going to be so pro atomic history, or—?

Well, I'm sure you'll get some protesters, and I think that's healthy. I think that's fine. I would imagine you would get some international visitors who will come, very skeptical, maybe some Japanese who will want to see what's there. But I think that's all healthy. I think that's good. I want to see the museum do a lecture series, which they've already started on, and bring people of *all* different persuasions to be part of that lecture series. I'm hoping that they'll host some conferences. I know there's an Atomic Culture Association; I'm trying to set up for them to meet there so you can look at the bomb and its role in art and music and movies and I think *that's* an important aspect to look at. So the *more* of that kind of interchange you have, the better. Now about the *Enola Gay* controversy, they were going to hang the *Enola Gay* in the Smithsonian, and then just too many people protested, so they ended up moving it out to a museum further away. I don't think there will be any one object in *this* museum that is that offensive. In Los Alamos they've got replicas of Fat Man and Little Boy. That's pretty controversial. But I think this will not have one thing that becomes a target.

Oh, OK. Well, let me just see. [Pause] I guess the one thing that I could ask is, is there anything that you would add to your book today if you could, and then your opinion on Yucca Mountain, and has your opinion on nuclear weapons changed or evolved?

I just did a revised edition of the book and I added a chapter that brought us up to date. I [00:35:00] don't know how I would change that, but I have in *mind* a lot of topics on which to do further research. The popular culture chapter is one that I've gotten very interested in and gotten some more articles out of that, looking at atomic music, atomic movies. An article that I hope to write will be tracking this health care legislation and the politics of getting that through Congress, because nobody has really looked at it from the standpoint of interest group activity, personalities involved, and how you follow that through Congress. Most of the focus has been on

the lawsuits. And so that's something that's on my list whenever I have some free time that I want to do. So you know that's coming. And every time I teach the class, I get some new ideas because students do reports and things that always get you thinking about different angles, and so that's always kind of fun. That keeps me active in the field and involved, so I enjoy that.

I'm very opposed to Yucca Mountain. I feel like two wrongs don't make a right. People say, Well, it's already contaminated. Why don't you put the waste out there? I think that's the exact *wrong* approach. I think Nevada's done its share. We don't get any benefits from nuclear energy. We will have the most deadly substance on Earth trucked right through our communities and left here *forever*, or virtually forever, by our standards. It jeopardizes our health. It jeopardizes our economy. And you know the difference between testing to save democracy and storing somebody else's waste is a *very* different kind of concept. So the same politicians who supported the test site don't necessarily support Yucca Mountain. *And* the same people who trusted the AEC in the old days have learned a lesson, and they'll *never* believe anything that DOE tells them. They show these films of these big casks running into trains and dropped off the Empire State Building and the like. People stop and think, Yes, they used to show us Bert the Turtle who said, "You can duck and cover and be safe," and we believed that. Why should we believe this now? *I* don't believe it and I will oppose it as hard and as long as I can.

Well, thank you very much.

[00:37:27] End of Track 3, Disc 1.

[End of interview]