

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

Interview with
Anne Welsh

June 23, 2004
Las Vegas, Nevada

Interview Conducted By
Suzanne Becker

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Table of Contents

Introduction: memories of grandmother, Anna Roberts Parks, observation of above-ground tests from Las Vegas, NV home, local feelings about the Nevada Test Site in the 1950s, husband's childhood memory of measuring radiation in Boulder City children	1
Family history, education, marriage and family, description of family property in early Las Vegas	4
Description of Las Vegas during grandmother's era, from 1911, and during her own childhood	9
Recounts Army life with husband Myron Welsh (1962-1965)	11
Involvement with church and community, and concern with social issues (1980s)	12
First visit to the NTS, evolution into activist for nonviolence, involvement with Nevada Desert Experience (NDE) and Pace e Bene	13
Work as secretary and teacher for St. Viator Catholic Church	19
Involvement in NTS protest movement	20
Concerns when son David Welsh began work at the NTS	24
Bringing of her children in her to test site protests	26
Remembering her first arrest and interaction with law enforcement, details of arrest at NTS	27
People's assumption that protesters were communists	32
Children's involvement in social activism	35
Evolution of thought re: the Roman Catholic Church and activism	37
Influence of Roman Catholic faith and teaching on ideas of social justice	40
Work with antinuclear movement: volunteering, housing protesters, participating in Lenten Desert Experience (LDE)	41
Children: their travels and life experiences	43
Involvement with activist women's groups	45
Experience of being an older activist	46
Concerns about current state of affairs, sense of conflict about the NTS in re: jobs and local economy vs. weapons and radiation effects, and the isolation of groups	48
Conclusion: relationship of weapons testing to devastation of soldiers returning from war, the significance of current remilitarization, changing political climate, and divisions within country and society	52

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[00:00:00] Begin Track 2, Disk 1.

Anne Welsh: There were select groups of people who maybe expressed an interest, either signed up or something, and they were notified that if they would come out on such and such a day to meet—

Suzanne Becker: *So this is when the test site first—*

When they were doing the above ground testing.

And you say your grandmother [Anna Roberts Parks] was invited out to see that?

She went out.

How did she get that type of invitation?

She must've elicited an interest, or they may have been trying to promote it and because she had been a businesswoman and was somewhat known in the town—she started Palm Funeral Home.

She was a mortician, the only woman. And she came here in 1911 and started Palm Funeral Home in 1925. So that was a cool thing that she got to do it. But then—

Did you talk to her about it? Does she have memories or recollections of that?

Well, she's gone now. And at that time I was a kid and just about anything she did was cool. She was a *major* rock hound. She was probably more interested into the land part of it, what it did to the earth and stuff. It was very impressive. I think everybody who went and—let's see, she was born in 1888 so this would've been in the 1950s, maybe the very late 1940s. No, we started testing in the 1950s, yes. So she was not working anymore I don't think. She sold that in 1955.

But I think it was prominent people that were invited. I mean unless you were really persevering I don't think just an ordinary person could go out there.

So it was sort of like a grand opening, so to speak, PR—

Yes, they just wanted them to see it. Awesome. I lived on First Street in this town, 619 South First Street, and my window was on the street, from my bedroom, and across the street were homes, some houses. But there was a clear view and then the next—on that block First and then became Main and on Main it was the ice house. Are you familiar with the ice house?

Yes. It's now a big bar.

Well, it's not exactly in the very same location, they call it—yes. The ice house was across the two streets, two blocks over from my bedroom window. And this was a truck stop so it was flat. And one morning, I don't know what woke me up, but I got up and I had Venetian blinds and I either lifted them back or pulled them up, and there was an explosion, big bright light, and then the mushroom cloud came. I was a kid and I remember it was impressive then too as I go, whoa!

Did you have any concept of what it was or what they were doing?

Only that it was cool.

Just because of the huge light and then the cloud.

Yes, and just everything. It was cool to have that. They had the atomic drinks and the hairdos and—they were going on and I wasn't paying that much attention but looking back they show you, this is what was the thing.

So what was the feeling around town about this? When it was open (the NTS) there was sort of a sense of pride or people were excited about it?

Yes. Pride, and it was very special. This powerful thing that was so awesome, we owned it, not realizing what we owned unfortunately.

Do you remember what you were told about it, especially because you were a kid? Do you remember how they explained it to you or—?

I went to Fifth Street Grammar School and I think we must've talked about it. You know they say that they talked about duck-and-cover. I honestly don't remember that. I honestly don't remember that happened, though it might have been. It just was so much a part of school things that it was just something you did.

Did you have drills?

Only fire drills that I recall. But my husband lived in Boulder City from the second grade on through high school. And out there—this is long after we were married, and I was active in this, and he said, when I was in second grade, I think—he must have moved there in the second grade, or maybe first, but I think he said, In the second grade, we all got this little badge to wear and we had to wear it for a week or two weeks or something, and at the end if we were able to turn that back in, we got a pencil. So they wore these little badges on their shirts and then after the period of time was up, then they got a pencil. Well, they were measuring radioactivity in Boulder City. So people knew something had to be—
[00:05:00] *So they put these badges on the kids and then what the badges picked up registered something and then they were able—*

Yes, whatever was in the air, because kids are outside all the time.

So they didn't mention that part to them.

Never told them, no. They may have said that they were measuring something but when he talked about it later, when he was telling me, he said clearly they were measuring that. He said, But you know we all wanted that pencil, and so we were really good about wearing our little badge. It's just kind of a sickening thought, that that would go on. I gave a little speech when I got involved with the test site. I was super enthusiastic and I told that story.

Because we even then, and I think you've heard this, the hotels made sure there was nothing blowing *their* direction, so it all went to the Downwinders in Utah. And I've gone to the university and heard a mother speak who lost—I think she lost her little girl, a two-year-old, and numerous members of her family and friends and neighbors and everything. It's just—it's inconceivable that we were doing that and not telling anybody about it. As time goes by we find out all kinds of things that they're not telling us. So....

So your family has been here a long time then.

Yes. My grandmother [Anna Roberts Parks] was basically a pioneer to the city.

And she came here when?

In 1911 I think she was whatever age that would make her, from 1888. I think she was around seventeen, is that right?

Twenty-five or so.

I don't think she was—was she that old? Ninety-eight. Oh maybe. Well anyway, she came with my grandfather. They were business partners, I guess. There's a video out that the museum has put out. The Southern Nevada Museum on Boulder Highway? They started that with her collection. And if you'd like I have a video I can let you—I'll loan it to you and then you can drop it back by when you're done. It tells about her beginning in life and everything. Anyway, she came here and she was just involved with the starting up, mining, and then they married. I have her marriage certificate in there on my wall. And then they—I forget what they started now. I can't think of the name of it. We did this in like 2000 and we were just—I was just full of all the information. Anyway, they married and then they were in business here and he—they got a divorce in 1925.

Unheard of for the time.

Yes, and the things were closed, we were told, sealed. One daughter, my mother. And it was really contentious, and he actually left town afterwards because it was so—I'm guessing it was very scandalous. But she was her own detective for her side. She went around and went to California and found out that the lady he was with was signing her name in Macy's. So it's very interesting. But anyway, that was she, my grandmother, and a very busy lady and very activist in a lot of things.

Sounds like it.

Yes, rock hound, belonged to a group here called the Clark County Gem Collectors. And so I come by it naturally, being involved in things. And this where we're sitting used to be 160 acres.

Really! So this whole area was theirs.

Yes, all of Paradise Crest and Oak Crest was hers. She homesteaded it. You live on it for seven years and prove up on the property, you have to improve it. So the gentleman lived out here for her and took care of it. We call this the Ranch. She had rabbits chickens, ducks and turkeys. I think that was all. Quail. She loved quail. And the curve in Sandhill Road was her doing. She had been drilling for a well—one which was just the other side of this wall, it was dry, and another place—and when they finished drilling there would be this quite large hole that was quite deep. I was really admonished not to go near that.

I'm sure.

Yes, that was one of the things. But Frank LeLeota lived out here, first in a tent; when you go to the Southern Nevada Museum you'll see there's a tent out there with a guy sleeping in it. It was like that. It wasn't the one but—and then our little homestead house that he ultimately moved in is out there.

Is that the house out front when you first pull in?

[00:10:00] The small one. The little one. It's like a tiny little one, twelve by twelve or ten by ten. The other house is a duplex she bought from Nellis Air Force Base. So Frank lived out here and she homesteaded all this. So when she was digging that well, she found one, it worked—then the road was coming through. Now if the road had kept coming it would have come right through the property this way [indicating direction]. So she went out when they were surveying, with a gun, *I* think it was a shotgun. They said rifle in the video but I don't know. I do honestly think it was a shotgun, as I remember being told. And she just said, *You can't come through here.* And so the surveyor said, *Well—I guess he said, OK.* And I heard that story all my childhood. And when I grew up—my husband, we came back from Germany, he had been in the Army— I was at a party. He was working for the water district. And there was a guy there that was related to a friend of mine from high school and we got to talking about my grandmother and stuff and I told that story and I said, *You know, I mean you hear those things but I really don't know.* And this guy's name is [Richard] Barozzi. He worked at the water district for a long time. He may even be gone. He was laughing and said, *I want to tell you something. That's the God's truth.* Because he said, *I was nineteen years old and I was the assistant to the surveyor.* And he said, *And I was standing behind him.* Because she did indeed have a gun and she did indeed tell us, *'You can't come through here.'* So we didn't. So when you see all the maps of Las Vegas coming off of Boulder Highway, you looking at Sandhill and it goes like this [indicating direction]. And that's why. *That's amazing.*

Yes, it is amazing. So I don't know. Let me think. I grew up here. I went to Gorman High School. Went off to university, Nevada, Reno, where I met my husband. We went overseas and when we came back we had—we went with one child and we came home with three—we proceeded to have five more, so we have eight children. They all grew up—we did five years

over off of Desert Inn and Sandhill and then my mother gave each of my brothers—I have two brothers, younger, Michael and Jim. She gave each of us five acres out there. She had by then sold to Collins Brothers which you see all the homes. And she gave each of us five acres and we took my—Myron and I took my five acres and sold some back to Collins, let him keep it. And he built our house for a minimum amount, and we stayed—we're on an acre here. And my brother Jim's was next door, that's another acre; Michael sold his so he doesn't have any here. And we've grown up out here with these two acres, which has been just wonderful.

Oh, for Las Vegas, I bet.

Yes, it's a little nice oasis.

So your grandmother had—this was 160 acres and this is where your mother grew up in this property—

No, this was all just scrub. There wasn't anything from here to the Boulder Highway. Nothing. It was a dirt road. And we would actually come onto the property at the corner of Sandhill and Flamingo. It wasn't Flamingo then, but the 7-11 there. You just cut across that intersection and then you'd hang a little bit of a right and we came on diagonal to the property. This is Sandhill now. We would come onto the property here [pointing to map]. And Frank lived over in those trees and that little cabin was further over. It was over on Jimmy's property, and when Jimmy sold it we rolled it over here because we didn't want it to go with the.... So there wasn't anything out here. Nothing. The first house that was built that I recall was the one—well, you wouldn't even know, but it's over by the high school, and it just kind of—here was Boulder Highway and you turned off and you went down Sandhill and here was a house right here [indicating on map], but I was twelve then, and then you came to the property. And out here, what is it, Sahara,

Flamingo—no, Sahara, Desert Inn, Flamingo, Tropicana. They all had different names then. People would know. I forget that stuff.

Now the other thing. You saw these big trees out in front of our house? Well, if you were to go back to some pictorial history of Las Vegas, they actually planted these athol trees, or they call them salt cedar? They actually planted a line of them, and these trees here would match up [00:15:00] with trees all the way down to at least Russell Road and then all the way to Boulder Highway, as a windbreak.

So they were just a line of trees to keep the—

Yes, they just kind of went along because the wind here. We have bad winds. Now things are kind of tamped down, but in those days—I read an article, and I think it's in some of the stuff that Anna left me, a little article—this guy came, he was some sort of an engineer or something. And he said—this is way early in Vegas's history—No, this place will just shift and shift and go away. You'll never be able to do anything here because the winds come and this place that you're sitting on was full of sand dunes. When I was a kid and we came out, the sand dunes were over along over there [pointing out direction], maybe three of them, big ones. We had one horse. We could ride Topper out and then we'd play on these sand dunes, roll down them.

Really!

Yes.

This whole area?

Not the whole area.

But just this particular—

Because there were three, and there used to be sand dunes if you go south over by Sunset Park, a little south there, there might be something there, and there were some further out, but now as the growth comes they get rid of them. But you know wonderful. Sandhill—

So you've really seen this place change.

Oh yes, absolutely. I mean it's not the same.

Did you ever expect it to be like this?

No, never. If I'd known, I'd have gone south and bought anything I could. In fact my grandmother looked at the property where the Excalibur sits. She said it was too far out of town. She didn't think she wanted—

You're kidding!

No. And yes, she just—none of us did.

Yes, how would you know?

I don't think when you grow up here you think of it like the people who move here and go, oh my, look at this. So....

Yes, absolutely. So you remember sort of the development of the Strip then too.

Oh yes. By the time I was in high school, which was 1955 through 1959, you could just go out to the lounge shows, just walk in and—I couldn't have a drink but you could go in there. I don't even think you had to be twenty-one, but you could just get a non-alcoholic. You could go in your bathing suit. I mean it was so informal. And that was the Sahara. The El Rancho was there. That was a cool place, the El Rancho. They had Easter egg hunts every year. It was just an expanse of green lawn. It was so cool. And you could go out there if you were real cool and you could swim. You just kind of walked in like you owned the place and you know people didn't really say anything. I remember my brother—because a swimming pool in those days was just an

ideal dream. Oh my gosh, to have a swimming pool. My brother had a paper route on the Strip and I'd go with him some mornings, especially in the summer because it was so nice here in the early mornings in the summer, and after we'd finish there was this one motel that we would get in the water like seven o'clock in the morning. Once we got thrown out, but a few times we just... I mean the excitement of it. You probably didn't swim more than ten minutes because you were so worried. But having a pool. And when the Dula went in—Dula Center down there on Bonanza and Fifth Street, which is Las Vegas Boulevard— that was so wonderful, that great big pool? And I can remember, we'd get taken there, get dropped off by my dad—we had a truck. He'd drop us off and we'd swim all afternoon and of course then you get hungry and there was never a lot of money so we'd make our way home. We would actually come home barefoot from—this is Bonanza and I lived on First Street. And we would run from shade spot to shade spot down across Fremont Street, probably it went over to Second, maybe First, because my grandmother still lived—she lived at First and Carson. That's where the first Palm Funeral Home was. So, six blocks down First Street was where I lived, where my mom and dad lived. So sometimes we'd stop by there.

But yes, the growth in this town is phenomenal and it doesn't make me happy, really. I mean it was nice there for a while but now Reno is about how we were maybe fifteen to seventeen years ago. Now it's insane. I mean, there's homes and, so....

Yes. So going back to something that you were talking about earlier, which was sort of your early impressions of the test site when you were a kid. I'm just curious about some of your memories or your thoughts of that. I know we talked about it a little bit but do you remember your family talking about it at all, or was it a big deal like amongst your friends?

[00:20:00] No. I must have seen pictures of that wind blowing when they show—they drop it and then they have the fake homes and stuff. I must have seen photos of that at some point in time as a kid. Maybe not because then I saw so much later on. And we weren't a political family like mine is now. But Anna, my grandmother, was involved in things like that so I was aware of stuff. But again, in those days it was just a very cool thing to have, and the Army or any of the services could do no wrong, they were protecting us. In a way we were just—not just the kids but everybody. We just didn't know, had no idea.

So do you remember when you became aware of all this?

Yes. When I came home from Germany and had been in the Army for three years—

You were in the Army?

No, Myron. Myron was. We were stationed in Frankfurt, Germany.

When was that?

We went over in January of 1962 and we came home in December of 1965. And we were *glad* to be done with the service, and some things happened over there that I felt were just—I just didn't want to be government stuff anymore. I think if you're in it a little while—I remember once Kennedy was coming to view Frankfurt and—Myron was with the 317th Engineer Battalion.

So he was an engineer?

Yes, he's an engineer. And he [Kennedy] wasn't even going to put down but he was coming close to wherever we were, and they *painted* the ground green so that it would look like grass.

And it was all this kind of preparation going on so everything—

For Kennedy.

Yes. And we lived in Army quarters and—there were two buildings that faced each other. Myron was an officer—which was very nice. So there were three stories and the top story on the end

had four bedrooms and two baths, or maybe only one. Anyway, they fixed up these quarters and then they went—that's where he [Kennedy] saw, supposedly, how the people are living. Well, we weren't living bad at all, but—

But not like they were displaying to him.

Yes, it was so contrived, to me. I kept saying—of course I wasn't very quick then and I would say, That's not true. That's a lie. Why would they do that? Well, this is how they did everything then.

So anyway, with that little background, then I came home and I started having my children, more children, and we got really involved with the Church. But I was always—social issues have always been important. My grandmother was really a good helper around town. I remember going with her to bring eggs to the sisters. There was an Episcopal church on Third and Carson and we'd bring eggs from out here. Those were the Episcopal nuns. And then the Catholic sisters lived over off of Eighth Street and she often was bringing things to them. So I was aware of that with my connection with her.

So there was always sort of this community involvement.

Yes. You helped—right. The Church was pretty open about things then. I went to a meeting at the library for Greenpeace, and they were talking about the whales and everything, and then they slid over and started talking about the test site. I had no idea. And as I recall that was my first eye-opener from when I was a kid. This was really cool, to, this is not a good idea .

And this is in the 1970s, late 1970s?

This was in the early 1980s.

Early 1980s. OK.

Right. Because I remember taking the kids. We were really solid churchgoers then. I remember not going to church that weekend and on that Sunday, and I think it was Palm Sunday, so it may have been 1986. Somewhere between 1985 and 1986 or 1987. And as a family we went out. We sat around a little—now it's long gone but it was just—it wasn't even a campfire, I don't think, but they had brought logs and they were sitting like this [demonstrating] and—

You went out to the test site?

Yes, to the entrance there, with just a handful of other people. I took my kids and by then we—well, Danny came in 1976, so we did have everybody. I think we must've taken them all. And then we just prayed and talked about it and said we didn't think this was a good [00:25:00] idea and kind of were a presence.

And then I started going more regularly, and as I did, then you go to meetings, people talk about things. That's when NDE [Nevada Desert Experience] was coming along and the Franciscans. And I would say from 1988 till just a couple of years ago, there was a peak there. There were thousands of people. Oh my gosh, it was just tremendous. And there was this city, well, kind of looked like a hippie city because you're living in the desert. It's very hot out there in August, July. It's awful.

And now it's changed a lot. It's so modern now. When we went we were just kind of making do. There were no Porta-Potties or anything like that. But as the events grew, then they got a little more sophisticated, which was good. But I don't know people still do even stay out there a week ahead or not.

I believe that they do. It's just not as— it really seems like the time frame that you're talking about was a peak time.

Oh yes, it was amazing. And we were just—people would come from all over and they would—it's such an interesting thing because you figure it's right here. I mean it's sixty miles from our house and we can drive to it. People would come from all over the world literally and they were so concerned and they'd say, what are we doing? This is not a good thing. Well, it's sort of like being a member of the Mafia as a kid. You just don't realize.

That's a good analogy. Interesting.

And then when you get—because Uncle So-and-So is just the best guy to you. Of course he assassinates people periodically over the week but none of that is touched by you. So here we were and people would say, what do you think of it? And you'd say, I'm just finding out. I had no idea it was so bad.

What was it at the meeting opened your eyes?

Literally I was worried about the whales, that we needed to look after the whales because they were going to be extinct and we were doing all these dreadful things. Then as the conversation moved along the man who was talking, or the woman—I think there were a couple of people there, as they were talking, then they moved over to, here's something else that's going on that isn't good for any of us. The whales, the stuff that's emitting, what it's doing. And of course [as] a young woman with all these children, I was just dumbfounded. So then I started reading and learning about Hiroshima and actually what happened to those people and how it was done, and then we did it a second time to make sure they got the message and those kind of things. I'm a super activist now for nonviolence. I show up at the federal building on Thursday mornings from eight to nine. And prewar. We were there before the war not to go on and now we're just a presence that this is a bad, bad idea. So all of that. One thing leads to the other and I think I'm not unique in that you go worrying about some seemingly—not a big deal but we should be connected—we should be concerned about it, and it opens you to, oh yes, well

guess what? And then it opens to pretty soon you're thinking, holy cow! So then I—and I also talk to my kids, always have talked to my kids—there was a movie out way back then. There's one out now called *The Day After Tomorrow* but I think this was called something like *The Day After*. It could have been. And it was a nuclear explosion and what had happened. And I made them all—big hype on the news—and we all sat in there and watched it. I don't know, I think David was away at college by then, but I had him watching it in Colorado. He was in Boulder, going to school there. And he called me and gave his idea of it. And they were terrified. I would never do that again. Never. Because I was so—I was like a kid myself. I was like, Did you know? But I'm telling ten-year-olds.

And one thing that happened in my—as I was being activist in this. My daughter Anna was—I think she was a seventh-grader right over here at Woodbury, and at that point that was a seventh-and-eighth-grade school. I don't know now if it's sixth but.... And that one and there was another time, because there were two schools involved. Anyway, this guy came. He was with the [Civil Defense] [00:30:00] They were wardens in groups and they watched out, in case there was something bells and whistles would go off and they'd get people to go into shelters and such. Well, he came and talked to the kids at junior high there. I don't know who the kid was in school there. Anyway, basically he [said that] the Russians were bad, they were horrible, horrible people. He was demonizing the Russians, and by then I was already into, what do you—? We don't demonize the enemy because very often we might—well, as of now, today, we seem to be a lot worse. I think people's eyes are somewhat being opened now too. But anyway, I called up the school and I said, I'm involved with this and, I said, I think that we should have another view. This is a totally militaristic, telling the kids [the Russians are] horrible people, you should hate them. And I'm home telling my kids we don't hate people. And so they wouldn't let me—they wouldn't let anybody come and talk.

You're kidding.

No.

So they just had that one point of view.

Yes. This guy, and he was a retired Air Force something. I don't think he was an officer. By that I mean it had been his whole life, and he was there indoctrinating these kids.

So then this is obviously before our end of the Cold War kind of—

Oh yes. Yes. Now we go to the high school, and that was Anna. She came home and said, Mom—she must've been a freshman or a sophomore and she was number—the sixth kid, the second daughter—she came home and said—she was so excited. Oh Mom, she says, this person came and talked to us today and he said that if there's an atomic bomb—because we called it that then. We never—I don't think we said nuclear. We were still saying atomic. She said, If there's an atomic bomb, they told me just what I'm supposed to do. I get on my bicycle and I either ride to the school—there at Chaparral—and then I'll be safe, or I ride over to the Boulevard Mall—which is Maryland Parkway and, what is that street? It's three different names. Anyway, where Dillards sits.

OK.

Yes, everybody knows—so she said, I go over there and somebody will be waiting there for me and they'll take care of me. And I just went ballistic. That's when I started calling around. There happened to be a school thing coming up and parents were going in the evening to Parent Night. They come and they show you where your kid—you move through the classes. So in one of the class—it was the PE [physical education] guy I think, he was teaching her something. You know how coaches teach sports but then they teach civics or something. So it was in that class and—he was a low-key guy and said, So here's what we do

in here, and he gave a little presentation and then he stopped and he said, Does anybody have any questions? And the mayor of the city was in that with us. His daughter was in there too. I can't think of his name right now. I raised my hand and I said, I'd like to know why you're telling these children that if we have an atomic attack, that they can hop on their bikes and ride here or to the Boulevard and someone will be there to wait for them? That's absolutely false. There are no bomb shelters in either of those places. We haven't had bomb shelters forever. And the guy, the poor teacher, I might as well have hit him with a wet mop. He just didn't know what to say. And of course I was angry so I was on the attack and I started listing things and saying, you know, First of all, *da-da, da-da, da-da*. Second of all, I don't want anybody telling my daughter to hop on her bike and ride somewhere. I said, We'll be lucky if we can move because we're sitting right next to Nellis Air Force Base. We're going to be in deep trouble and nobody's going to be riding bikes anywhere. So I'm really offended that you would tell her that, that you would give her this false—we need to tell truth, *da-da, da-da*. So the mayor is sitting there and he's a kind of a young-looking person. He's still around. I don't know if he's still in politics. His mouth is just dropping because his—and I think he said—something about a shelter, like maybe in City Hall or something.

And I looked at him and I said, Is there a shelter in City Hall?

And he said something like, Well, I really don't know.

And I said, Well, I bet you there's not.

This was now in the 1980s. In the 1950s there were shelters around. That was a big deal. People were putting them in their homes, digging a hole, all of which was only moneymakers for the people who sold the stuff. But this was something—and here's [00:35:00] what happens with this kind of information that begins to kind of trickle out, you'll be safe. You won't be safe. If we have an atomic attack and we are miles—we are like five miles from Nellis Air Force Base

which is a *major* Air Force thing. If people are thinking clearly—which by the way we found out later the Russians were doing all they could just to keep up with *anything*—that would be a target, as would be Boulder Dam.

So all of this is what starts breaking open. This is what I learned from NDE and Pace e Bene. I don't think Pace e Bene was in—it's only been started briefly here. But anyway, what I learned is that this is what we have to get out. We have to explain to people, you're *not* safe. And the reason you're not safe is because your government is lying to you, for whatever reasons they have. You're at risk and if you want to do something about that, then that's when all this swelling came to the test site.

And my kids went out with me sometimes. I was arrested four times. But in those days, they didn't go further. And you know the first time I was arrested I was a *wreck*. I knew I was going to do it because we talked about it. We would have meetings before and we'd say, *you know, this is nonviolent*. You're not to go limp but you also—you comply with whatever they ask you to do. It's a statement. It's a citizen's statement against what their government they feel is doing wrong. So I was always arrested with that in mind. But they didn't want this to get in the news.

“They” being the test site?

Yes, the federal government. They didn't want light shone on this. They didn't want a hundred people coming in, mothers, wives. There was a gentleman I knew who has since passed away who was a parole officer; he took a day off—he lost money. He took a vacation day or a personal day, that's what it was, came out to the test site in his little white shirt with his tie, and his name was Steve Pollard. I said, *Steve, great to see you out here*. And he said, *Yes, I think it's important that we come and that we show that we don't like this*. I mean a

parole officer! They have so much going on, and then to take—and then to lose that pay, that money. My husband always said—he went out a few times with me. He was always supportive but he's not a big—

So was there ever any tension between—he was in the military and then you becoming—?

Oh no. He was in the military from ROTC in college, which was helpful to get through college. Then we had the draft, so everyone thought, well, I'd rather go in as an officer than an enlisted personnel. And we were fine with it. We went overseas. We lived there for three years. That was a wonderful experience.

I don't know if you want this in here but I think we're in desperate straits now. I think the people who are running the country are criminals. And what we're going to have when they get out, if they get out soon or in another four years—I'm not sure we'll know what to do with the mess that they've left us. I think they should be—I think he should be impeached and the others should be on—all of them. It's horrible. It's horrible.

And people are now in such a place. When I was doing this in the 80s, people were—it just seemed like they were more—like, really? Huh. And then they'd see you going. I had a reputation where I worked; St. Viator's School next door. I wasn't in the school but the Religious Education office.

Were you a teacher?

No, I was the secretary and I taught CCD, which was catechism, for seventeen years. I taught second grade first communion for ten and then I did other classes. And finally at some point in time they said, Do you want to work in the office and we'll pay you? And that seemed like a good idea, so I took the job in the office. But in those days, people would say, Oh, you're at the test site again. They'd see—there'd be a little clip in the news, about thirty

seconds long if that, then they'd see all these people and then they'd say, *yes*, and I said, *yes*, *come out*. But whenever there's a group of people and it begins to swell, whether you like what they're doing or not, you notice them. And Father Louis Vitale who I'm sure Rose [Sister Rosemary Lynch] has spoken about, he was a huge role model, was out there a lot—
Yes, and actually the director of the project spoke with him about a month ago.

[00:40:00] Yes, he's just wonderful. And we vigiled in front of the federal building, on the other side of the street, because we have a newer one now that's on the east side. But I remember standing there with Louis and we were protesting the war, the Gulf War. And people would drive by, as they did at the test site, [and] the thing they say to you is, *get a job*. As if you're just this bum that has no job and no responsibility and you're just out there. I venture to say that most of the people there had other jobs. The ones who didn't have a *real* job were spending *all* of their time educating other people to what was going on.

The other thing that was very wonderful was when we were out there along the highway. As they turned off of the main highway, that would be 95, and turned onto the test site road, we would line the sides, have signs or wave at the people. Now here's the men and some women sitting on the bus. They're riding the sixty miles from Vegas. They have left their cars in these little parking lots that were set up, get on the bus and rumble out and go to work and then they rumble back. Some of them—I don't think any of them—I don't recall—I sound like Ronald Reagan now—I don't recall anybody flipping us off. They may have, but I do recall people sitting there looking and they'd go [makes a facial expression here] just like, *we agree with you but I can't say anything because this is my livelihood. And that is a dreadful thing. It's like these kids who are over in Iraq right now. Why did they sign up in the military?*

To get out of where they lived and *maybe* have an opportunity at an education. What a hell of a thing to do to our youth.

I agree. It seems like other people that I've talked to have a sense that there's very much in common between the people that are on one side, protesting so to speak and then those that actually worked there.

Yes, and that was a real—that was a thing for us when we would get a little head sign or something from somebody —usually it was the peace sign—almost like, I'm a prisoner here. Thank you for standing up for me. But they were making wonderful money. And I have a friend there who was an engineer, a very close friend for years and years.

Who is he?

I don't know if I should tell you his name. I won't tell you his name but I'll tell you what he said. He worked at the test site as an engineer. He and Myron went—he was at the University of Nevada up in Reno, too. He's a double-E, an electrical engineer. Myron's a civil. So anyway, he got out and had done his military service, it was like a six-month thing. It was a kind of a crazy thing. You could go away for six months and then you were in the—not the National Guard but the reserves. So every month for a weekend you had to go and do your little whatever, and that's what he did. He didn't actually go, like Myron went into the service and served. But anyway, this gentleman worked at the test site and as an engineer he worked at some pretty intricate things. He started talking about quitting the test site, which at that time was a very good job. Those people were making pretty good money. And he wanted out. He wanted to quit and he wanted to go to law school. And I remember saying—either I asked him or I said to his wife, I said, why is he leaving? Why is he getting out? And she said, He told me one night, I don't want to incinerate babies.

That's very powerful!

It is very powerful when you think he was the person who was working on the bomb. He was electrical, looking through things and seeing what was being done, and that. I don't know if he'd even agree to that today because he has become so conservative.

Do you think that he would want to talk to us, be a part of this project at all?

No. No, but they're not in town—they live here but they're not in town right now. They're traveling. I could ask, but I'm almost certain he'd say no, because he's not a joiner at all. He doesn't do anything like this.

Well, the thing with this project is it's for no other purpose other than to gather stories. I mean it's not—

[00:45:00] I know. Yes. He thinks *now* that this is a good thing; I'll tell you how much he changed from *then*. He did go off to become an attorney, and when the Gulf War started I was protesting the war. I was all—this is horrible.

And his comment was, Just 'nuke' them all.

And I looked at him and I said, I can't believe you said that.

And he said, Well hell, that's what we have those bombs for, isn't it?

Let's just use them.

Here's a man who I admired because that's why he got out, and now he's—life comes along and you have these experiences. You know a conservative is the liberal who's been mugged.

Very well put.

That's not mine but that's what happens and then they start going, Well, wait a minute. I don't like this and I want this stopped and *blah blah blah blah*. Well....

If he'd be willing to talk about it, we'd be very interested in hearing his thoughts and his experience.

Well, you'd certainly get a pro there. Yes, I'll mention it but I don't—they're out of the state.

OK. Well, this is an ongoing project so we've got some time to work on it.

Yes. I thought about him because I always used that statement of his when I'd tell people back then.

Yes. And it would be great just to get his perspective. So anyway if—

I will but—yes.

Just thought I would put it out there.

Sure.

I think that's a good illustration of this duality that exists.

Then there was this woman. She worked for me, like a housekeeper or something, and her husband worked at the test site,. She talked about him going out there every day, and he made good money, and he'd just drive his little truck somewhere and just read books all day, comic books or something.

What did he do out there?

I have no idea. But have you been out there?

Yes.

You've been shown the tour then.

Yes.

I never have gone. I'd never really—I've gone a little ways in but not deep. It seemed like what she was saying was, there's just nothing for him to do. But they're out—and then I've heard this on the radio, somebody called in, and this—again, this same gentleman that I didn't want to say his name. We were out to dinner and there was a gentleman and he hooked up with him. He introduced us. And that guy was still working at the Test Site. [In] the Area 51. And my friend said to me, Oh Anne, you should talk to this guy. I mean he's got the stories.

He works in Area 51. And so that guy never opened his mouth. He just wouldn't—I mean he was very polite and—

Is that because they have this security clearance and—?

He just wouldn't enter into it. Yes. There was nothing he would say about any—he didn't indicate, yes, I work there. He didn't say yes or no. He didn't talk about anything about his work. It was just a big hole in the conversation. Talked about everything else, was very pleasant, but I remember coming away thinking, holy cow!

Just that element of secrecy almost adds to the whole—

Yes, because I knew my friend and he was involved in the shots. And then later on my son worked out there. Had a *terrible* time getting a job. He was out of school. He came back from college—

Which son is this?

My oldest one. And oh my God, he went to work for the test site. I couldn't believe it. And it was through, as so many jobs in this town, somebody knew somebody. So he was—I mean he'd been working—he'd been looking for work for months, months, almost a year.

What did he do out there?

He did contracts.

What kind—?

He wrote contracts. I'm assuming this means—and David, my son, he might talk to you.

I would love to talk to him.

He lives in Portland but he's moving the end of the month and he's going to Tucson. But possibly he could even give you—

We can do a phone interview too, but yes, I would love to talk to him.

But he kept saying to me—because I was *so* unhappy that he worked there. He needed to get a job; all of them needed to work. As they got out of college they *needed* to go to work because we were still putting others through. And he tried everything, literally. I don't know if it was a whole year but it was real close. Finally somebody—because through the church you know people—so this came about and don't you know, he got this dumb job. And I said, I can't believe it. *I'm out there protesting and they're seeking security clearance for you. You're not going to get the job because of me. And they actually went to Boulder, Colorado, interviewed his grandparents who lived there and interviewed the people on each side of them and asked what they knew. Because I had been arrested. By then I had been [00:50:00] arrested at least once, maybe twice. So I didn't even think he'd get it. Well, he got it. Apparently I wasn't much of a threat. So anyway, he went to work there and he wrote contracts. And I remember—he always said to me, Mom, think of it this way. I think like you think. So, he said, It'd be good if I worked there. I will have a better idea of what's going on and what's happening. Not so much a spy—but just that I'll be working there. And I said, well, as it happens I'd rather have you there than somebody who is gung ho of this stuff, because he's a thoughtful individual and the first-born of that many kids, they're very compassionate. They have to be, or die because they're put in charge of all the kids that Mom can't handle. I mean, I'm busy with the babies; you do the four-and-five-year-old.*

There was something—oh, I know. When I went out to the test site one time and I was going to cross, I was going to get arrested, and word came out—I don't know how these things kind of work but they came and they said—I think I had brought some kids with me that time. Because they weren't all excited to come all the time.

Yes, I was going to ask what your kids thought about the whole—

Oh no, they didn't mind that. I think they thought I was nuts but I also think that in way they felt like I was doing something. After all they like me and probably thought that what Mom's doing is a good thing, and I would tell them, I'm doing this for you and the grandkids. There were none then but—so anyway, they (NTS security) said, If you cross the line, they will take your children on this side of the line. Here, you go across the line and your kids are gonna go here. Because the previous experience with getting arrested was you went in, you kind of made a statement [and] they put those little cuffs on you. At one point we just were put in two different areas, then they built those—

The pens, yes.

The pens, and then they had the men and the women together. And then they said, If you cross the line, it's up to you, but they're going to put your children in Child Haven.

What's that?

Child Haven is a place for children who are endangered, like a domestic violence. They go into a house—the dad's beating up the mom or something—

Right, and they take the kids.

They take the kids and they put them in Child Haven, or they become wards of the court temporarily because *you've* done a bad thing and you're not looking after your kids. That's negligent. So I didn't cross that time because I was concerned. And I always thought that—because I did cross one Mother's Day. This was the worst time and it was one of the biggest events. Thousands were there and it was a Mother's Day, so it was in May.

And this is again mid-1980s or—?

Probably more late 1980s. Definitely. Probably to 1989, even 1990. And I'm trying to remember if that was the Sunday—I don't think it was because I think that was another time. But anyway, I

didn't always go to be arrested. Because first of all, you had to be out there early, and then you had to wait. We moved up the line and then you were arrested, and each arrest was done one by one by one. It was time-consuming.

And if I can just ask for one minute, there's a certain significance that lies within the action of actually being arrested and crossing the line?

Well, I think there is. The first time I was so scared my hands were shaking. I was a wreck. I'm white and this is my hometown. I never made—you know I stop at every red light and I'm totally a law-abiding kid, and here I am—here's this officer, and the kid that arrested me—I have a picture of me back there with him—I said to him, You're not much older than my oldest boy. What are you doing here? See, now this is not—this is—oh, they're over there in Iraq too. Bechtel. They're the people, they hired those people to be the guards. It's not—there was a sheriff there who Rose became very good friends with.

[Jim] Merlino?

Yes, and he was always around. But the bulk of the arresting officers were Bechtel, and they were security guards like you have at the casinos. So here's this kid and he's arresting me. I mean he had peach fuzz. And I said, What are you doing? I just don't understand. You don't think this is important, that we shouldn't be doing this? Stoic. Not a word. Wouldn't talk to me.

Another time, I don't know if it was the same one, after the pens were erected, they brought us out one by one and we sat in police cars. We'd get into the [00:55:00] passenger seat and the officer was here with all the junk they have in the cars and then he would interview us, talk to us. And you know when you're doing this, when you're on the side saying, I protest this. I think this isn't a good idea. I don't think it's healthy for the environment. I don't think it's healthy for the people. I think it's an

aggression and money's taken for stuff that we need for *many* other things. And when you start demonizing people, where do you stop? I was very—as a high school kid I read an awful book about Hitler's Germany. It was probably a really trashy book. It was called *Hitler's Ovens*. But at sixteen that made a *profound* influence on me, impression. Just what they did and how it came about and, the atrocities; it's like now when you hear this stuff. People are just—they just say, no, we're not doing it. Well, yes, we are. Because there are some people who will go over the line, and if they get the impression, if not the direct order, that it's OK, that these people are not human. One of the comments recently that's been coming out is that one of those women who was like a lieutenant colonel or something, [said] these are dogs and this is how you treat them. So for me, with this test site thing, I know it was an outgrowth of that, of the Hitler thing, because I think when the government starts doing stuff that they don't want to tell you about, you better be looking. You better be paying attention.

The element of secrecy is definitely strong.

So I'm sitting there in this police car. I have seven kids, eight kids, and I go to church every Sunday, I don't break the law, *blah blah blah blah blah*, and I'm handcuffed, and this guy's asking me questions.

And so when he finished asking me the questions, I looked at him and I said, what do you think about all this? What do you think about *us*?

And he looked at me and he said, I think you're spoiled kids in a candy store.

I said, Really?

And he said, *yes*. He said, You're taking up time that we don't have—we're basically a nuisance.

So that was his attitude they were having to put extra people out there, spend extra time—

Of course he was making extra money. Because most all of the events are on a weekend so people can get there.

Right. Sure. Interesting.

And yes, we were a nuisance, an annoyance. And of course *me*, being the person I am, this was life-altering. This was changing. I'd been *arrested*, for heaven's sakes. I had been willing. They told us—some people who had been arrested for other things—that you may have to go to Beatty. You may have to go before a judge. You may have to stay in jail. I know lots of people I've *housed* people who have been in jail—were coming back to get arrested again. I have a priest friend who spent years and years in prison doing this kind of thing at SAC [Strategic Air Command] and around the country. So it was a scary thing. I was saying, OK. I had made sure my kids were all OK, if I had to spend the night or a weekend. I didn't want to do that but when it came to it I felt like if—down there now when we're at the federal building on Thursday mornings, eight to nine, there's eleven of us at most. And before the war started sometimes there were twenty. Well, if that would swell to two hundred this week and then next week four hundred and then the next week eight hundred, the government who is doing this stuff would be forced to say, OK. You see Bush now, he is coming out with, *I don't order torture. I didn't order it.* And you know why? Maybe not here, but around the world people are saying, what are you guys doing? You're talking democracy and now you're acting like the Third Reich. Well, what are we to believe? I'll tell you what we're to believe. We see this. We see— So going out to the test site and getting arrested and *talking* about it beforehand and understanding why you're doing it, and doing it as a legal and protected right. But when you meet these people, like this security man and the young man that arrested—he just cuffed me but it's very emotional. It's very emotional. And so you sing songs and you hug each other and it's

just—and then there are people—I never was mistreated but I know people that were yanked around.

So after you were arrested, then where did they take you?

I always stayed there at the test site. They kind of kept us—that's what I said. They'd keep you in the the pen all day. And then later it changed from that. That was the first thing, I think, was sitting in the car. Then later they—did they transport you? I think on a bus, they [01:00:00] transported us down to trailers. And then they had it all set up and they fingerprinted us. It was just [snaps fingers] like this.

So this was like just an operation that they—

Finally they figured out how to do it. Sure, come ahead, get yourself arrested, no problem, and then you wait for your—they'd tell you when your court date was. And all of mine came back and said, it's been dropped. And so had all these others been dropped. And Martin Sheen who has come many times, he was out there. Bishop Gumbleton with the Catholic Church came one particular—I think that was—maybe it was the Mother's Day thing.

But the reason I—there were two times there because that Mother's Day [laughter]—it makes me laugh because it's just so unreal—but that Mother's Day there we all were. There's always some people who have a little different agenda but by and large—there were Buddhist monks that were beating their little drum quietly. And we had prayed all weekend and had meetings and meals together and talked about it and shared our lives and so forth. Here we are out there on Mother's Day and there's black helicopters circling, and hanging out of each side of one was a kid with a machine gun and his legs hanging out. You know how that door is open?

Yes.

And they're just—I mean you could—they were like about that low [indicating distance].

They were pretty low.

Yes. Watching us. You know you hear all these people that are against the UN and they talk about, oh, those black helicopters. Yes! They're us!

That's such an interesting juxtaposition because here you are for peace and essentially they are sort of continuing to—

There you go. They're saying, sit down and shut up. We know what we're going to—

They're demonstrating, what you're wanting peace.

Yes. It was very surreal, and it was scary. And there was a young woman out there that day. I can't think of her name now. But I'd been spending the weekend with her because you do in little groups. They come here [to] our house. We house people here. So there was talk, and she had a baby, an infant under a year, and she was a nursing mother. She had that kid out there and she was nursing her. We used to cross over the cattle guard. OK? Then people began to branch out and they would walk—they would go through the fence. There's a—they have encircled it with wire. You have to physically go between—excuse me—and it's barbed wire. I think there's barbs along it. I can't think of her name now but she was so passionate about this obviously.

The one with the baby.

Yes. New mothers are that way. And she had long brown hair. And she—I don't think she handed that kid to me, I don't recall that. But I was standing—here's the fence and we're here [indicating positions], and this helicopter is circling, and she had her baby and handed that baby to somebody right in that group and then went with us and walked through. And as soon as she went through, got ten feet, then they came over and got her. Because now they appeared to me to be scrambling to get you. And I can see that they're concerned because certainly *I* was no threat but there could've been people who were, in their mind, and Father Louis did go in. If someone's

talked to him I'm sure he told the story. He went in and he sat in this [small building] all night and they made calls or something, and it was just bizarre. Bizarre. They didn't damage anything. But when they come and catch you like that, they would just—it's almost like, what are you doing? You're wrecking our—we got a thing going, you can't do this. Well, who are you? Who am I?

But now it's much more. I don't know. The people driving out there or riding out there, I don't know if you'd see any of that. But I will tell you that the cars passing us now, in the front of the federal building, there's more honking and peace signs and that's always what happens, don't you think? And that's what I was trying to remember, what Louis said to me one time. He said, when I first started doing this, and there's a saying of this way, that first they laugh at you, and then they're angry—there's three stages of this—and then they understand what you're doing or they begin to listen. And when I first got started with this I was [01:05:00] so naïve and I took it so personally. People would drive by and scream; and at the test site they always called us dirty Commies. I'd think, I'm not a Communist. I didn't like the Russians any more than they did at that time but I didn't think that they were—I mean I thought there were some terrible things that they did—

But this wasn't the answer.

But no, this would not be the way you do it. We should still be talking with Saddam Hussein. The only thing bad with that would've been all the people that he was hurting. But beyond that we should've still been at negotiating tables talking, rather than going right into this awful war. So yes, we thought there should—and by then I didn't think the Russians were such bad people either. By then I knew—people had come over; I had been enlightened. I mean I had been educated, like Sister Rose. I went to [a peace meeting at] the university when the Gulf War was

on and starting and she explained what she'd known. And she'd been over there, traveled, lived over there in that part of the world over time, knew people, and said, here's what's going on.

You're being told some stuff but it's not—and that's always the case with this.

About misinformation.

Yes. I'm a good goer and doer but I'm not a very good "bring people along." Because I get so angry about it. Then I'm not a good person to educate. Rose is wonderful. She would go and visit with this sheriff. They maintained a friendship even. And that's really important.

You mentioned that one young officer, security guy that arrested you, as kind of stoic. How overall did you perceive the relationship between you and the security to be? Was it a fairly amiable or—?

I think the security thought that we were nut cases. I think they thought—you go out to the desert and there are people who do this kind of stuff and they're not interested in their haircut, they're not interested in new clothes; they're living on a wing and a prayer as far as any monetary value to their life. They are giving all of their time and effort and energy to this cause. They don't look like people on the street look. Myron always said, my husband: People should go out there in their suits. You should wear out there what you wear to the office— so that they see that you *do* have a job, you're a regular guy. So whenever he went, he always wore his suit coat and a tie. He always did that.

That's got to be warm. That's great though.

Well, there were other times when it wasn't so warm, but the big times are in the summer.

Because he said if you dress—it's like with the airlines. If you work for the airlines and you travel, you have to dress nice or they won't let you on the aircraft, because you represent the air—you work for them or your family is somehow—so there's that front that we have.

But the officers who arrested us, they thought we were stupid. They thought we were un-American. That's always another one. They thought we were Commies or not working. And it wasn't—and what could they say? I mean there's no point—I'm not such a great talker but I knew people and I still do know people who can engage and make very good points. And I bet you that some of those people were changed or thought they saw a side of it that we didn't see. Any time you're in an institution and you're into it thick, you know things that the public doesn't know. I found that in the Church.

It's because you're in that community and they're sort of outsiders to that community.

Yes, and so it's like in a family. They're not really secrets but they're not something that you broadcast. And some people can be a super homilist and be a really short-tempered, impatient individual, which doesn't exactly lend itself to the priesthood or whatever it is. And [01:10:00] there's activists that I find hard to be around because they are *so* driven and passionate. It's like feminists. I considered myself a women's libber and then eventually a feminist, but I met some women that were feminists that I thought, I'd have a hard time being around you all the time. So it's the same thing out there but—

There's just degrees in any kind of an event or any organization.

Of course. Yes. So fortunate for me though I found a group of people that—and I'm still friends with them—Julia [Occhiogrosso] and others. And there was a man called, his name escapes me... He said, some people have to come early so the rest of us can arrive on time. And I feel that's what the test site protesters were. And we weren't even the first wave. There was one man, I think he's gone now; he, by himself, would just go out there every day and just sit. He just was a presence. He didn't sleep there, I don't think, but he just—all by himself. And when my family and I went out in the mid-1980s, there was nobody there. My kids said,

This is what you were so excited about? Mom, we're here by—what? And it was talk and share a little bit. In the family we did that, but they were kind of looking around. That was their very first activist thing.

Did they go out there with you, as time went on and a larger crowd got to gather?

Oh yes. But that's my thing and while they agree with me—they're always telling me, Mom, you're preaching to the choir. But one of my sons, when he went to school in Oregon, he went into I think it was—is that important? Anyway they were doing a [protest] about the FBI—no, the CIA was recruiting on campus, and he went and locked himself around a [pillar] inside the building. And again, though, they didn't do anything. He didn't spend any time in jail or anything. But they all have a social core. Of course you get out in the real world and then these things alter you.

But they are—yes, they're good solid kids and tight with each other and they're helpful to other people. They learned there and grew from it. Probably more than me. The one, Douglas, will e-mail me something and I'll think, oh my gosh, he just understands it so well. He lives in New York and he's an architect. He watched the towers and all that from his rooftop. He lives on the third floor so he could go up. Saw the first, he saw the first explosion out his window, like he was just getting up and looking out the window and he went, Oh, my gosh! So then he called and I think he said to Darren, his brother, Oh, my gosh! I think we're being bombed or something. And then he went looking for film and so he actually got downstairs and rounded up the film and came back up. And I think then the second plane hit. And I remember him talking about it. He said people were just moving toward it, because he could look over the side. He said, I really didn't want to go there because I honestly believed that it was a war that was starting. But he said there were people that were just moving in that direction.

Toward the towers.

Yes, moving, going in. He lives in Manhattan so he was close.

Very close.

Yes. But anyway they definitely got an education from me and they're very savvy about stuff.

But they're not joiners, if you know what I'm saying.

Right. But they have a conscience and participate.

Yes, they don't—yes. They kind of don't engage. And they probably learned that how much good—in fact my husband and I go round and round: Come with me. We need your warm body standing there. But he said, I don't think it does any good.

Do you wish they would engage more?

I do.

I have to stop here because I want to continue on but I'm just about to reach the end of the disk.

OK, that's fine.

[01:14:59] End Track 2, Disk 1.

[00:00:00] Begin Track 2, Disk 2.

So actually could you talk about that a little bit more?

Oh, with the Church?

Yes, I'm just curious. You're not involved with the Church as much anymore and you said you see things differently.

Yes. I think sometimes it's a matter of evolving, maybe growing up or growing. And the Church does many wonderful things but it's an institution and like any institution, as we were talking earlier about secrets, things become more and more important as you get bigger and bigger. You have more to protect. Which Dorothy Day, made reference to, or Peter Maurin—who was her buddy and really was her mentor.

From Catholic Worker?

The Catholic Worker, yes. That you live [with] a little less because then when you fall you don't have so far to go. When you've got a big corporation or a big institution that's bringing in money and you're wheeling and dealing, and it turns out that somebody in the group is a bad apple or he's doing things that you wouldn't—you say, well, we won't talk about that. But that's just what's happened, in my opinion, now with the Church. I mean Cardinal Law, what was he protecting? If you follow the teachings of the man they claim to follow, Jesus Christ, he was totally open, wasn't he? So now they're protecting, and when people start protecting like that, then they start doing things, they compound the—if they'd have brought it out in the 1950s it would've been horrible. I'm not sure the Church would survive. But today I'm not sure the Church is going to survive anyway. Certainly not in a way that may be it had thought. I stopped being a Catholic for personal reason, and it wasn't because of the scandals or anything. I just worked in that environment and I have some really good friends, a very good friend who is a priest and others I know and I really admire and respect. But I just don't go through the Church anymore.

Has that at all impacted your conscience or—not your conscience but your social conscience and your activism?

Oh yes. Oh. No, it hasn't affected by activism. I'm just doing it now I hope from a more honest place. And it's hard to be around people who are very Catholic or very religious if you no longer think that way. It's a definite separation. Right now the big thing is all this Christianity that's floating around, and I find that very hard to be around. And yet my husband reminds me that I was a *super* advocate against abortion. Had the pictures, went around and gave little talks. My kids will roll their eyes if you bring it up in front of them: Oh my gosh, Mom, you drove us

crazy. I mean I was just a fanatic. And then something happened and I began to reevaluate. I began to change and look differently. I still don't think it's a good idea. If somebody said, this person wants to have an abortion but—I *have* taken, I *did* take a woman into my house and let her live here for a time. I would *do* that. If any of my kids had an abortion I would be devastated. *But*, here's the thing. All these people who say no abortions—if you're going to stop it, if you're going to make no way for those people to do anything and forget the abortion—back up, let's go upstream, let's do birth control. No, they won't let you do that. There's the Church saying that. So now we come down the slide. Now we have whoever, a young girl, inexperienced, or—and two of my daughters have worked—my one daughter worked for Planned Parenthood and the other one is now a doctor. She worked in a clinic in Portland, and both of them had this experience, different but similar. They (women) came in for an abortion, this woman did. She didn't believe in abortion. She didn't think it was right *but* they can't afford this baby. So, I'm here because we can't afford this baby. And I want this safe procedure because we can't [afford another baby]. Another woman [said], she had an affair with [00:05:00] a black man; the husband was a military person and if he found out he would kill us. So I'm here. So those are other issues that come in. The very people who are the most outspoken are the ones who would come and use it in a heartbeat, where it's been made safe. And then there's people who say they would grab the woman around the middle—a friend of mine in church said this: I would grab them and I'd pull them back from going in there. And I'm thinking, you just don't get it. You're not in their life. You don't know what's going on with them. Maybe could we help them? But it doesn't matter. They're going to do this. I wish they wouldn't but—I don't wear makeup. I wish people wouldn't wear makeup so much. I think they look silly. But I can't make a law that says because I don't like it, you shouldn't do it. And then they say, well,

we're talking about a life. Well, it's all pretty much the same idea. It's imposing your belief system on someone else who doesn't have that belief system. So I stopped being a big voice for [anti-abortion] and I send things to Planned Parenthood occasionally because my daughters—they worked in it. They counseled and they talked to people and—but anyway, I've changed. I evolved, I hope.

Yes. Absolutely. It's all part of the process.

And when you're with the Church as I was, and when you break away from the Church, really it's hard. It's not easy to do.

And for a long time—I was with somebody not too long ago and I said something about, well, that's a Sunday.

And she said—she's retired like me—she said, Do you care if it's Sunday?

And I said, No.

She said, Do you even know the days of the week?

And I said, Well yes, Sunday's still special.

And she says something about, I don't even think about it.

Well, I don't think about it in terms of Mass anymore. I just think about it in terms—Sunday's a cool day and you should do interesting things on Sunday still, even if you're retired. But when you leave the Church and have all that guilt that they love to put on everyone growing up in the 1950s, *whew!* It was hard to break away, really hard. But I feel like, if you go someplace and every time you sit down at this place you cry, it's probably not a good idea to keep going. Or, Why are you crying? I'm crying because I don't believe this anymore. I don't belong there. But no, it hasn't hurt my activism. I'm still very strong with it. I think we should speak out, *absolutely* think we should speak out.

If I could go back just a little bit, you had mentioned that you taught catechism classes and you did that for quite some time. I'm just wondering at that point if your social—how those might have informed each other or if they even did. It sounds like you had a social conscience and were active at that point.

Yes, that was from the Church. I went to catechism as a child here in Las Vegas, and in the eighth grade my mom sent me to boarding school in California, called Ramona Convent, run by the Sisters of the Holy Names. And I was there for a year. Again it was a lot of social justice and they'd talk about those things. The Church does do that. I know they do.

So that's heavily influenced.

Oh yes. Oh my. It's my fabric.

And so when you were teaching then, was that a part of—

The social justice?

Yes. I'm just wondering if it had any bearing on your interactions with the kids or within the school?

Yes. They were public school children that come after school, for a while on Saturday mornings but then we changed it, we got out of Saturday morning because we were competing with sports and it was just too hard. Sure, yes, I tried to be honest with the children and tell them about life so that what we were teaching connected with that. And I think—are you familiar with the enneagram?

Yes.

OK. Well, I didn't know it then, I learned the enneagram later, but I'm a six, and sixes have a problem with authority. They don't often behave, they're always going at it. So from [00:10:00] my perspective, I was teaching the kids you've got to get this. It's doctrine for the Church. And

then it was their spiritual life which I was concerned about. I wanted to help them. I taught all levels, high school, kindergarten. I helped start the preschool at St. Viator's for the little kids so while Mom was at church, the baby could be playing like babies should be playing. So I started there in—oh, it's not so quiet, is it? [Phone ringing]

Do you want to—?

No, it's all right. Anyway, we came home in 1965. In 1966 I joined St. Viator's and was involved there and worked there; taught and did all number of things until I retired in 2001. So I was there a long time. And I loved most of it. Really did. Made life-long friends. Again the social justice is really taught well by the Church, especially if it's done by people who have some taste of the outside world. But yes, I think that's what got me to the Greenpeace [meeting]. And that grandmother who was taking eggs to the nuns.

Yes. I don't know if you did this too, but when I was speaking with Lillas [Gordon] she mentioned at some point, particularly during the height of the no-nuke era, so to speak, that she housed a lot of people that came through town. Did you also do that?

Yes. I did. I met some really fine people that way and we had some wonderful discussions late in the night.

What was that like?

It was great. You're enthusiastic and somebody comes to your house and they're enthusiastic like you. You just sit down and pick up a conversation as if you have known each other. And they tell you things and you think, oh my gosh, I didn't know that, or what they're involved in. I had two women here who were Buddhists. And I always got really very gracious notes back. They enjoyed staying here. And of course when people are traveling like that, a lot of them don't

have a lot of income, so *getting* here is a cost, so if they don't have to pay... And we were lucky, we had this [home and space]....

How did they find out about you, or that they were able to pass through town?

Well, those groups, The Catholic Worker was doing some of it and NDE was doing a lot. So during the course leading up to the event, there'd be meetings. I was going to things on a regular basis at that time. [If] something was coming up I'd [volunteer] at the table as they came in in the afternoon, or pick people up at the airport, take them to where they needed to be, host them, drive people out there, drop them off, come back, get some more, whatever. There's a walk that takes place around over the Holy Week and they start here and they actually walk out there.

To the test site from here.

Yes. Yes.

Is that the Lenten—?

Yes, the Lenten Desert Experience. So [I]went to the beginning of those walks, several of them.

Yes, *rah rah*, you guys are so great, and then they made their way. But if I was somehow connected, maybe helped with meals or something over there. You would have forty or fifty people that were here for the weekend and they were staying at various houses. Some of them were staying, maybe sleeping in the church or something. But they would come together for little talks. I think it was when Reagan was doing his thing in Central America. At Christ the King Church, we had a conference weekend and you could choose who you wanted to listen to or take part in. One of them I went to, there was this priest who had been down there in Central America. We were saying, why aren't you writing back these terrible atrocities that are going on? And he said, We are. And [00:15:00] they write us back and they say, 'if you send any more of this, you're off the payroll.' Now you're sitting in

a group of ten or twelve people and here's a man who's *been* there and he's *seen* the atrocities. I'm talking about, Nicaragua and El Salvador, those four church women that were killed. They're witnessing this (the atrocities) and you're saying, oh my gosh; we got to get this *out*. And they can't. And he said they could continue to send it but their funding would be cut off, how or whatever they'd worked out. Can you imagine a worse place than that? Feeling so strongly, you're writing, you're seeing it happening. you just need to let these people know, and then they say, *we really don't want to hear that*. And of course they think *we don't want to hear that*. So it's just a cycle.

It sounds like you met so many people.

Oh yes.

How was your family—what was their reaction to when people would come through town and stay at the house? How were they with everything?

They were always good. Sometimes I got a little bitchy because I wanted everything to be nice when the people were here. That was the hardest on them. They never minded the people. And to this day they're an outgoing group. Our oldest son did Semester at Sea where you get on a boat and you travel around. And that started it. And the kindest thing happened. We went out to see him off at the airport. He was a junior in college. And so it was an early flight. I think we had to be out there like at seven in the morning or something. And all the kids that were home came out. Myron had to work. So we're sitting in the airport and we're all talking—he's going on this exciting thing.

And the pilot comes by and he sees us out there and he says, *What's going on here?*

And so, [I said] *My first child, oh, he's doing this and we've all come out to wave him goodbye.*

And the guy said, *well, that's great.*

So he gets on the plane and then the stewardess comes out and—I think David boarded but there was kind of—they let them all go in. He [the pilot] invited all the kids in and they got to see the cockpit, and it was just so great because it was such a kind and such an amazing thing to do—the rest of those kids, whoever was there, they've been all over the world—because he made that seem so fantastic, so wonderful. David was going off on this great adventure. And indeed he did that for just the semester and then he came home and we all went up and got him. I tend to do things like a little amoeba; we do everything together. Myron couldn't because he's always working so we can eat. But we drove up to Seattle and picked David up after this and then we came home. Thank God for McDonald's in those days because I just had this much money and everybody knew what they liked.

But then the rest of them have all—then David went back [overseas] and walked on his own. He went back to all these countries and traveled. And then Donnie went to France. Cami never did, the girl. Darren has traveled a *lot*. He's one of these people that keeps track of his countries. And Dougie too has been out there. I'm going through the list. Anna just went to the other—she always wanted to go to Rhode Island so she went to school there for a semester. And Sarah—they're all adventurous in their own way. Sarah rode her bicycle from Portland, Oregon to Portland, Maine with a friend in the summer before she went into med school.

That's quite a trip!

Yes, it was quite the trip. And Danny is the youngest and he thinks he's an only child unfortunately. [laughter] He's not so adventuresome. He likes comforts, so.... But that's what happens. Because when they were all growing up, things were just always a little bit dicey. We used to kid about, well, another one's going off to college so bring out the spaghetti, and that kind of stuff.

[Laughter] Wow. That's a lot of kids to—it sounds like though they've got some good values instilled in them and—

They're great human beings. Yes, they are.

—you know, that sense of good social consciousness and—

Yes. They are, and they all went to college and they all graduated.

Wow! Congratulations. That's no small feat in itself.

Yes, it was.

I know when I was talking to Lillas she also mentioned that—talked about the time when the Soviet women came to town. Were you involved in that as well?

[00:20:00] No, I don't think so. I know I wasn't. And I don't know when—I'm a friend of Lillas's now but I didn't know her then. We didn't meet up for some reason. She was also probably with—it might've been my grandkids are older than hers though—Grandmothers for Peace was a group. And there were a number of groups that were involved in other places. They had little, whatever, sections and then they'd converge here. And I probably was always with the religious ones because of my involvement with the Church. But there had to be these others, like the Soviet women. And I know I heard about them. I may have even been at some of the meetings they were at. I remember sitting next to Gandhi's grandson—no, is it [Indira] Gandhi? Yes, her grandson, in a circle one time. He was right there talking and you're sitting there thinking, oh my gosh, this is amazing. My [quests] were more just individual, like one or two at the most. Sometimes there would be four but they would all be from a church or something and they'd heard about it in their parish. Because the word was really getting out then. It was really an active thing going on.

There definitely seems to have been, or to still be, sort of this ebb and flow of awareness and also as well as people going out to the actual site or even organizing in town. I mean what is your sense of that? Do you think we're going to—it seems like we're in sort of an ebb right now.

Yes. We just had a meeting the other day with The Catholic Worker and we were looking around and we're all gray-haired. The only people there that were young were two newcomers; one really wasn't even a member; she was just a visitor for that moment. So we're still activists but you just get tired. I don't know how some of these people like the Berrigans, they're just strong right till they drop. I went to a talk a couple of years ago. I have a goddaughter who's involved in social work, and peace and social justice work. And Dolores Huerta, have you ever heard of her?

That name sounds very familiar.

She was with César Chávez.

That's why her name sounds familiar.

Yes. And everything he did, she did too.

That's why.

But she came and talked because of the job things that are going on here with the Latinos. We've got a subculture here where we're not paying them the same. They have no benefits, but they're building all these homes that you see sprouting up by the hundreds. And so I went to that talk, and listening to her—she had nine children and she never stopped. And I'm sitting there thinking, and I call myself an activist. I mean not even close. Out in the parking lot. I think you reach a point where you're, *whew!* Tired. But we just show up the best we can. Sometimes I say, I'll just be there. I can't do anything before it happens and I can't stay after but I'll just come.

When was the last time you were out at the test site, do you know?

It's been a couple years. I'm not sure what happened. Something changed and I don't know what it was.

Changed in you or—?

I was just no longer—I really think what happened was that we thought, well, it's fixed. It's on its—

The moratorium.

Yes. What we were trying to accomplish looks like it's a done deal or close to a done deal, and so our energies would go elsewhere. I started at the test site and that brought me to The Catholic Worker. Then I was serving on the coffee line. We started serving at 6:30 in the morning.

The coffee line at the test site?

No, for the poor. So I started doing that one morning a week, then two mornings a week, and then whenever they needed me. So I was involved with that kind of stuff. And that took over from the test site. I pulled back from that thinking, OK, they got it. There's the people who came before me, two or three generations, and then there's me, and then there's people who are coming after me. It's like with feminism. These young girls who don't have any idea of the wonderful opportunities that they have because people literally gave their [00:25:00] life. I don't mean killed but that they spent all their days making sure that somebody understood that a woman is equal in pay and everything else. So when you see it accomplished, then you go to the next thing you think needs to be addressed.

Yes, that's a good analogy.

And I think that's what happened to me, because I never missed an event. Someone died in my church and they were having the funeral. There was an event that weekend and I called her up and I said, You know, if I could get out of what I've committed myself to do, I

would, because I want to be there at Brian's funeral. But I said, I can't. It's not like I was such an important cog in the wheel. It's just that everyone did a little bit, so when you pull back then somebody else has to cover for you, that kind of thing. She was very kind and she said, I'm glad you called. I understand perfectly. It was known that I was busy doing this stuff, and I was doing it a lot. It was as I do everything, I just go whole hog and then wear myself out, and so—

But yes, I haven't been lately. But now—if you're paying any attention, holy cow—we're developing a weapon that will bury itself in the ground and explode.

Right. Is that that bunker buster or whatever that is?

Yes. Insanity. And now I have six grandchildren. I look around and I think they were the ones that I was—besides my children, none were coming yet, although I did get a couple early on—that's who you're doing it for. It's not for us.

Right. So I'd like go back to something you mentioned earlier, but it stuck in my mind. You were going in, would line up along the road and the workers were bused in. And sometimes they would acknowledge you, your presence [and] you felt like you were both on the same page with things. I'm curious about what things were like locally in Las Vegas too. The sense that I get is that a lot of people may have had feelings about the test site or may have possibly been opposed to it, but because it was such an important part of the economy and so many knew people or had spouses that worked there or kids—do you get a sense that there were a lot of people that were really opposed to this but really weren't vocal or didn't do anything because they were in at position where they couldn't?

Well, yes, economically it made a nice life for a lot of people. I mean they were making a good wage out there.

Yes. Right. Yes, it was huge, a huge part of the economy here.

Great bennies and the whole thing. Of course they (Feds) were at the same time making them sick. I didn't know so much about economics back then. It seemed to me that this was a bad thing, that you shouldn't work there. Being the privileged person I have apparently been all my life, I never worried about that kind of stuff. But it was definitely—it had to be a conflict for people: I need this job. I've got a wife and three kids. And if they close it, then what will I do? Some people, as my friend, had the option to change direction and go to something else, to get out of that. But I would think that [for] most of the people there, it was just a great job for whatever education or experience they had. So it was horrible. It was definite—it's like out in Henderson. We've had the pollution and stuff. There's something—I don't know if it's still out there. I want to say titanium. But anyway, that's the thing. You're working at the factory and if you don't work at the factory, what will you do?

Do you think maybe, and I'm guessing too, that that impacted their families and their spouses, where maybe people in their family would've been a little bit more vocal or, opposed to the test site but felt a tension because, well, my husband works there, or my brother works there?

No. I think very few if any people who were married to or in a family of the test site worker came with us. No. There was one time when they matched us for people. The test site families were on one side of the road and we were on the other side, which is wonderful. You set up evil against good or whatever. And they were screaming at us and they had a big sign and they were gung-ho. I learned later that most of those people got money; it was like overtime or something.

Really! So they were hired to—

Well, I'm guessing that maybe there was a meeting called or maybe there was a memo that went out that said, if you come out and counteract these protesters—

[00:30:00] *So basically they were hired to protest the protesters.*

Yes, and to show solidarity with the workers. And again, there were catcalls and ugly things said across. None on this side. I mean that was one of the things. Nonviolence means exactly that; it talks about words, actions or about physical presence, how you present yourself. And there were hateful things they said. Because you feel like you're doing this good thing and it's for the good of mankind, you hear those things and it's sad. Like, *Get a job. I do have a job. I work when I'm out here with my precious time because I think this is important. But I also imagine, as with everything like this—in our country right now we have a—what's the word I want? We have a feeling that you just don't say too much. You can't just say—and I think that must've been the same for those people. Certainly there couldn't have been any person who worked there with us. No way. I would guess that they would lose their job. And, I don't know how to explain that because Myron's always worked and he had a college education, so we were always fortunate in that.*

He's still an attorney?

No, he's not an attorney. My husband's a civil engineer. My friend went to become an attorney.

Oh right, your friend is the attorney. And he's still a civil engineer.

Myron's still a civil engineer. But what I mean is that I never had to make that choice of, I'm going to have to quit this job because I don't believe in what they're doing. But I *met* people that would *come* here that *had* been in that position. There was one gentleman that was a high humpty-dump in the nuclear industry, working in a little cubicle doing his thing, and when things started linking up—I remember standing, we were in a line going through getting the food, like a little buffet thing at the church—and he's telling his story and I'm thinking, holy cow! As you

have heard, in Germany they did this, and they probably did it in the United States: You just work on this. You don't worry about this and you don't worry about this. You just need this.

So you don't really actually know what you're—the work, the product.

You don't know what you're doing, exactly. And so this guy was one of those people. He was a physicist, smart, and when it all linked up for him he was appalled and he quit. He walked away from what he had worked his whole life to be and studied for. Those kind of people. I mean that's conscience. And those are the kind of people that often would come here and that we would touch base with. So that was very—it gave you that this is the right thing or it's good, we're not by ourselves. Another thing I think when you do this, you feel like: There's only five of us. Does anybody else feel this way?

I would imagine there would be some isolation.

Yes. A friend of mine, that I'm still friends with, she said, I've lost all my friends. She says, what do you talk about at a cocktail party? Nothing. And pretty soon I just keep getting less and less invitations in town. And that has happened. If you're vocal, if you break away from the tribe, they don't want you around.

And that's due to sort of your breaking away from the Church.

Oh yes. I try not to confront people with that. I mean I don't come roaring in and say, I don't do this anymore. And I still have friends in the church and people say, Oh, I don't see you around so much anymore. I say, No, I'm busy. I'm retired. And I did. When I retired I started going and visiting all my children as soon as I could. So that was kind of nice. Then I just stepped back. But yes, there's a definite isolation to doing this kind of stuff. Which is why it's so wonderful to meet people who come and support each other. You have to. Otherwise you would just be so despondent. Because it's sad, what's going on. Sad to despair.

Yes. You'd think at this point—

[00:35:00] I was all ready to vote for Ralph Nader in 2000, thinking, no problem. We got it.

We're understanding now. We're moving on. We're going to make good schools for kids—and people raised those votes and everybody have a part of it. Holy cow! We've slipped back into the mud, the slime, the whatever. It's scary.

Yes, it's interesting times we're in. Well, I certainly thank you for taking the time.

Poor you. Did you have any idea you would get this when you called me? It's kind of an onslaught.

Oh no, it's great. It's wonderful to hear the stories and the experiences. Thank you. Do you have any other thoughts or anything else you would want to add to this?

Just at my age, I'll be 63 next month. I can't believe the work that's—It was naïve of me to think that it was over. Of course it's never going to be over. But I'm really glad that I was a part of it. I really feel on the peripheral now for that. But I'm involved in other things. Those bombs that they're making and testing, if you can't directly link them back to the homeless, you can certainly have a root that gets you back to there. The men that were on the coffee line back in those days when I was doing it so much—I'm back to one day a week. But those homeless men, a *good* percentage of them were Vietnam vets. And *they* were damaged. They couldn't live in society. They were just lost souls. And we're creating a whole other group of them. You don't go over and *do* things like that with people—see people killed, hurt and the devastation—and come back and just slip into society like nothing happened. More servicemen who were in Vietnam have killed themselves than died over there.

That is a very powerful fact and you have to say, well, the guys who came back from the Second World War basically brought this country—they came back, went to school, got jobs,

had families, built houses. As a child in the 1950s, life was great. Who wouldn't want to live in the United States of America? But now you look back and you see, those guys just shut down. They didn't talk about it. They closed that door, most of them, that's what they have said. They didn't bring it home with them. And for whatever reason, they were able to keep it locked up and things could go on around them and they were able to build.

Well, we weren't—I was one of the people—we were in the service and we got out. Myron actually had orders to Vietnam but he had resigned his commission. Dates are really important in the Army. He had resigned his commission and that letter went to Washington—we were in Germany—and his new assignment to Vietnam was coming. So they crossed in the mail, and they honored his resignation or he'd have gone over there. But when those guys started coming home and we started hearing about what had gone on, we were angry with *them*. I was angry with them.

And that's when we don't understand what we're doing. We're better now, with the yellow ribbons and the "support the troops" stuff—I want to say "bullshit" but... Because they don't really understand, I don't think. Could we stop them going and have this happen to them? Let's think about that. Oh no, we've got to go and show our power and our strength. Well, at a cost. At a huge cost. And now with what's happening with this testing and the money that's going into it, what are we going to do with those people?

A couple of years ago—I think the war had not started, this latest one—I was talking to a gentleman who's been protesting since the Second World War. He lost something like seventeen members of his high school class. He said there aren't beds now for the Gulf War veterans. There aren't enough beds for those people in 1991 who went. And now we've got all these that are coming [back].

And you know what? The country has been in a complacency mood for a very long time. When I talk to my children I say, I worry because you don't really under[stand]—and I didn't either. [00:40:00] Me too. Because I was born in 1941 so I was six months old when Pearl Harbor happened. And Darren came home one night after he'd seen that movie *Pearl Harbor* and he was explaining and he said, You know, we didn't know if we could win. Well, I never knew that. I never heard [that] before that movie came out and he came home and he saw it. I didn't want to go see it. But he said it was really touch-and-go. Well, I'd grown up on, we're the greatest country in the world, we treat everybody with respect, we're so wonderful, *da-da, da-da, da-da*. Well, here we are. Like somebody said at a recent graduation thing, Here's your world and we broke it. And now you guys have to fix it. I don't know what to tell you.

So it's just frightening. And what's going on with the test site, again—I notice things around. We're militarizing again, which frightens me.

Here.

Everywhere.

Just in general.

Everywhere. When you drive through Hawthorne, that's a military base. Well, for years it was sort of defunct. The only thing that you really notice, they had this little place that you put letters up on a—as you enter the base and they were like little quips or something. Well that's all gone. It's all serious now. *And* I noticed there's far more—whatever they're burying out there—there's, oh my, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds more.

Do you think we're gearing up again to make the test site active?

Absolutely.

I get a sense that it's been active but, it will officially become active.

Well, if he can get the funds, meaning Mr. Bush. Oh yes. I mean there's tons of—see, here's the thing. The military industrial complex is a huge moneymaker. You've heard the thing, we prosper in war. Wars are good for the economy. Well, kind of. But then you have to pay the piper. And that cost is those poor young men who went over there believing they were going for one thing when in *fact* they were going for something else. Now given the other thing that they actually went for, had they been told that, there probably wouldn't have been so many eager young men to go. Maybe some of them would've still said, I'm all for it. I can make money. But the protest is about the cost to the world. And in our country particularly we have people who are damaged physically and emotionally and mentally. We have no money for our schools. We have no money for our teachers. We have no money for our roads. Have you driven around this city? We need to clean, you know. And here comes the summer. Pay attention this summer and look at who's out there working. They're Latinos. And it's damn hot. Last year I thought so many times, I just want to drive up and say, Thank you. I really appreciate that you do this. I know you make pretty good money but it's an hourly wage. And it's hot. We just don't realize we have to work—as the parent of a large family with a working husband who helped in all areas, it's *hard*. And that's what we need to recognize in our country. We all have to be part of it. And when we go off and do something stupid like spending all the money on something that is destructive rather than creative or constructive, *hello!* Then we got to blame somebody when things are bad.

So this is essentially taking a lot of money.

It's taking *all* the money. The military is a huge welfare program. If they're in fact doing what this woman said her husband was doing, if they're going out there and sitting in a truck and reading comic books because they have nothing to do—that could be one person and it could be forty. You'll never know.

Yes, it probably depends on what his so-called job was out there.

Right. And everyone has had a job where there are times when it's kind of slow, where there are times when you can't get it all done. But when there's secrecy then you know that you've got problems. What's a shame and makes you sad to despair is that, what will it take for people to wake up and go, well hell, that was a dumb idea. Why did we think we could do that?

Hindsight.

Yes. And blame. Somebody has to be responsible. So we pick on the lower people in the society.

[00:45:00] And yes, I think we're in for some tough times. We're in for some actual bloodshed. I think this country—I can't remember in my lifetime when it's been so divided. The McCarthy era but that was the Communist threat. There's a lot more of us now and we are really split right down the middle. Do you find that in your schooling and everything when you're—of course you're on campus so that's more liberal.

It's a little bit more difficult to tell on campus. Sure, I think there's a pretty good split on campus.

I put signs on my fence all the time, or I used to. My first one was “Boo!” around Halloween. I wrote a “B” this big [indicating size], I cut it out and put it on there. And since that time I've put political signs on. *Once* I had a person go home—whatever I wrote was about Reagan, I think. Anyway, whatever I had on there, this person went home and got a big poster board and *answered* me. And he came back and he nailed it on my fence. Oh, it was great! I loved it. He was angry; he was supporting Reagan. By then I wasn't. And I'm afraid now to do that.

Really.

Yes.

The climate has changed that much.

Definitely, yes. And I didn't just put political signs. When our kids got married, when Sarah was ten, what was her thing? Number 7 is 11. She's the seventh child and when she turned eleven, I put Number 7 is 11. And Anna and Dave were married in the back yard. She's the older sister to Sarah. And we put "Hitchin' Post" for their wedding. And somebody literally came by and left tea towels in the mailbox as a wedding present for them and said, I just love your signs. I always look forward to seeing whatever you have there and always make it a point.... Well, now I'm afraid to do it because I think what's happened in this country is that the people in charge, and most notably George Bush, is an irresponsible person. And he has given permission with his tactics and the way he talks, that it's OK to be *macho*, and that *macho* is the worst kind. It's like saying: It's OK. You can pound somebody if you want. You can call them a name, dead or alive, or, bring them on, those kind of things. Then those people who are just waiting for some little hint that that's OK to do, throw a rock through a window.

So it becomes more pervasive in our culture.

I absolutely think. And the violence is up. It is up and that's why. *Because* they're frustrated. They feel like they should fight back but they don't know what to fight back at. So if you say—I don't put out flags, I don't do the flag. One of the things we've talked about with my group of friends who do this kind of stuff now, the protesting, is we used to love the flag. We still do but we love it in a different way. When Reagan was in power and those hostages were in Iran, over the fourth of July I made an eagle—Myron made me a great big eagle like this [indicating size]—and then I put it on the fence and then I put bars across it like it was in jail. Another fourth of July, I cut out all the letters for "We the people of the United States, in order to form"—and I put those on the—we call it Mr. Green's house. It's the larger house. And I nailed them up so you could read it and then Myron shined the light on it so at night you could see it. But now I don't—when I put that up there, the wrong people come out. Not the wrong people, but people

read it in a different light. They're reading it like we should smash people who don't think like we think. *We're* not a democracy. We think we can go to Iraq and do it? No. The election is still going to be debated for years to come. I don't think he's the real president. I don't know who *is* but I don't think it's him. Now I'm afraid and when you get to be my age and you've never been afraid, you think, wow! This is interesting.

Something's changed.

Yes. I mean I have friends that we just don't talk about it.

This is quite a juxtaposition from when you were a—

It was fun.

—kid in the 1950s and seeing the blast and the cloud and—

And be proud of it.

—thought it was—yes, and you had pride and thought it was pretty cool. Very different now.

[00:50:00] Very different now. And when you say that, immediately they say, you don't support the troops. Not over there. No. I want them home. Those nearly nine hundred young men and women who are dead, a *lot* of them would still be walking around alive. The *thousands* that are maimed, losing three, two, one limbs, would still have those parts if we had talked, if we'd waited. We had the whole world behind us. We made a colossal mess. Now, excuse me, how can people not see that? Why is that so hard to figure out? If you're a bad neighbor, pretty soon you have repercussions. I mean it may take a while but eventually you'll either be isolated or people will start sailing rocks through *your* window. It's pretty simple. You grow up in a neighborhood and if one kid is ostracized in the neighborhood, he begins or she begins to make trouble.

Yes, there's definitely been a shift.

Oh God, it's horrible. It's horrible. And I feel bad about that and I haven't [altogether] stopped—I still do things out there but because our life has changed and we're not home as much, I don't like to. Danny was staying with us one time, my youngest son, and I said—we were going off to Utah for something and I said, I was going to put this sign on the fence, Danny, but because you're here by yourself I didn't—and he said, Oh thanks, Mom. Because he's fine with me doing it but *he* doesn't want to do it. And when you've got people out there that feel this so strongly, both sides—I feel it as strongly as the other side feels it—and they see something like that... Now I feel like they have the OK to react to it or do something to stop it. So that scares me.

Right. Yes, it's interesting times.

Yes, it is. It's exciting. I think it's also going to give us some upheaval that may be helpful.

People maybe will take more interest.

We shall see.

Yes, you don't know. I know. Anyway....

Thank you.

Oh, you're welcome. You're welcome.