

**Shirley Campbell**

Where: West Virginia Humanities Council MacFarland-Hubbard House

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Date: April 26, 2016

Location: Charleston, WV

Interviewer: Emily Hilliard

Transcription: Emily Hilliard

Length: 1:10:29

Shirley A. Campbell (March 17, 1949-January 10, 2021), a native of Pinch, West Virginia and a resident of Charleston, West Virginia, was a lifelong songwriter and poet. Two of her songs were recorded by Grandpa Jones and Ernest Tubb, respectively. Campbell married into the Reed-Campbell family of the bluegrass musician Ola Belle Reed, who was her mentor.

This is the second interview between Shirley Campbell and state folklorist Emily Hilliard.

Read Campbell's obituary:

“Shirley A. Campbell, 71, of Charleston, WV, passed away suddenly at home, Sunday, January 10, 2021.

Born March 17, 1949, in Pinch, WV, she was the daughter of the late Ruby Francis Jarrett and Jack White.

She is survived by her two children, daughter Carlie Campbell of Charleston and son Jeremy Campbell of Elkton, MD; and pets.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her beloved dachshunds, Buckwheat and Alfalfa.

Shirley studied at Oklahoma University and Marshall University. She was a nurse for 20 years, a dog groomer for 15 years, and a small business owner for approximately 10 years. She was a woman of endless talents, for many of which she received recognition. She was deeply devoted to animal welfare; throughout her life caring for ANY and ALL that she found in need.

There will be a symphony of animal calls greeting her at the gates of heaven; and it will be glorious!

As per her request, there will be no services. She asks that, in lieu of flowers, please donate to an animal charity in her honor.

You may send condolences to the family at: [www.barlowbonsall.com](http://www.barlowbonsall.com).

Barlow Bonsall Funeral Home, Charleston, WV, has been entrusted with the arrangements.”

EH: Emily Hilliard

SC: Shirley Campbell

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00:00

SC: Did I get into that?

EH: Yes.

SC: What I wrote. What I wrote. This—this is where... I don't know if I got on. I told you...this is the story of where he got killed.

EH: Yeah, you did tell me about this.

SC: Yeah, mmhm. And the other guy was my daughter's driving instructor at Pineville High School. And she adored him. All the kids did. It was just such a... like my son says "irony, irony. If it wasn't for irony, you wouldn't have a life."

EH: (laughs)

SC: And he's right. He's right.

EH: Oh Jerimy (her son) posted on my Facebook for my birthday and I told him that you were coming over today and he said to say hello.

SC: (laughs) Okay. Let me see what else I have in there for ya... Everything that's in here I didn't hand you, right?

EH: No. I think I only...

SC: Do you want any of that stuff to photocopy?

EH: Sure, yeah.

SC: Oh... have you seen that?

EH: Yeah! You showed that to me.

SC: Okay. I couldn't remember where I left off. You have to forgive me, I'm a little bit forgetful. Well I'm a lot forgetful actually.

EH: (laughs)

SC: (shuffles through papers) This is for...that's that... look that's that letter from the Franklin family I was telling you about.

EH: Oh yeah, that's...

SC: She says, "Thank you so much for the story about Jimmy. I'm sure you'd also crossed his heart and mind many times after that frightening night. If Jimmy could have chosen what he would like to be remembered as, it would have to be someone who loved and cared for others as Jesus did." Isn't that sweet?

EH: That's really nice.

SC: That's all in there. You're welcome to see it if you want to. But I just think that... and then that's a thank you card from them. It meant a lot. And I was so glad that... and did you know that I actually got negativity from that too?

EH: Why?

SC: The family of the... the family of the... Carly's teacher that died? Was angry.

EH: Why?

SC: That I had put something so po...they blamed Jimmy for his death. It was a head-on collision.

EH: Oh, uh-huh.

SC: And it never entered my mind that would happen. Life is strange.

EH: But hadn't you already...yeah, hadn't you already sent it to the paper?

SC: Yeah, yeah.

EH: Yeah, so...

SC: No, let me see...had I or not? No. That was what made it a story. Because I found him after he was dead.

EH: I see. Yeah.

SC: Yeah, so no I'd hadn't but it never entered my mind that that would offend the... but he was a coal miner, Jimmy was, and a preacher. And the other one was a younger man and a teacher. And Jimmy worked the night shift in the coal mines and he fell asleep...at the wheel. And did a head-on and killed him. And so... but... and that was fresh to 'em too, you know what I mean? They were hurting terribly. But that was a strange thing to have happen (Referring to cat hair) You'll probably find a whole trail...you can follow me anywhere, with the cat hair.

EH: (laughs)

SC: (laughs) Alright. I've got one I'm gonna try to find for ya. (shuffles through papers) Here. That's Jerimy's sympathy. Jerimy sending me a thank you—empathy card—from Herbert's passing.

EH: Ah.

SC: I've got a... now let me see... Ah I don't want... yeah, I guess I do. I wanted to show you a couple pictures. There's me at the Flea Market up at Clendenin. When we were first getting it cleaned up and getting ready to go, you know?

EH: Cool! So did you work up there?

SC: I owned it.

EH: Oh okay.

SC: Yeah, and it did good for years and then my health just got so bad I couldn't do it anymore.

EH: But it's still happening?

SC: I don't even know. There was me and another guy. And he burned me out of the whole place. So you know, things like that could happen. But... (laughs)

EH: Whoa.

SC: That's just the beginning. It was a huge building, something like 16,000 feet or something.

EH: And it was right downtown?

SC: And before I had the flea market I went up to...there was a Park 'N' Ride up above Clendenin and every weekend people would just come from all over and set up their flea markets you know, their little booths and stuff and I used to go up there first. Oh, I just loved doing that stuff while I was still physically able. That was just so fun.

EH: They...I was talking to...do you ever listen to Inside Appalachia on the radio? Like a radio show with you know, stories, journalism and stuff. And I know one of the producers and I said we need to do a story about the roadside flea markets that are all, you know, especially if you get down to the southern counties, people are selling their old objects, their family members', barter...

SC: I know, I've been doing it for years. That's really... I've been disabled for years and I can't just live on what...I can't make it on what I get. So I would do things like that. Yeah, I became very familiar...that's what even made me like progress because I really started learning glassware and things like that and I LOVED it. Oh gosh.

This is...this right here is my grandmother White and it's... my understanding is she's a Cherokee Indian.

EH: Okay.

6:07

SC: And this is her. Isn't she cute?

EH: Oh wow!

SC: She was 4 foot 11 and that's one of her sons, but he favors my dad a lot. I have a crummy picture of daddy. And that's her husband but you can't see him. But that's Ed White and Cora Alice. But that was... on their old home place up in Blue Creek.

EH: Cool.

SC: Isn't that neat?

EH: Yeah.

SC: I don't have a lot of anything—real old pictures like this—but I treasure the ones I do have. Now let me see.

EH: So that was on your dad's side, so that's...

SC: Yes, the Whites.

EH: So the grandmother that you had the really good close relationship with...

SC: Was Jarrett.

EH: ...Was your mother's mother?

SC: Mmhm, mmhm. That's Jerimy. (laughs)

EH: Oh my gosh.

SC: (laughs) There he is!

EH: Oh my gosh.

SC: He used to be a little bit of a rounder.

This is Ola Belle [Reed]. She'd had a stroke.

EH: Wow! I don't think I've seen older photos of her.

SC: I don't think... yeah, this is after a stroke and probably not too long before she... There's Zane [Campbell, Ola Belle's nephew].

EH: Oh yeah. I know that guy!

SC: Yep. There he is again.

EH: Oh yeah.

SC: Do you remember where this place was down on Washington Street?

EH: No.

SC: It's about the 1500 block. I live up on the hill, but Charleston Department Store?

EH: Uh-huh.

SC: It's right in that region and Zane felt—he just went crazy for this place, you know, he loved this place. So he wanted his picture taken in front of it.

EH: Look at his scowl.

SC: Isn't it funny?

EH: Yeah.

7:39

SC: (shuffles through papers) There's Herbert [her husband] and Jerimy.

EH: Aw. That's sweet. Look at him in his little jumpsuit.

SC: (laughs) Isn't that cute though?

EH: It's adorable, yeah.

SC: And see, you can see how old he is.

EH: Yeah.

SC: And he'd never been married and never had a child. And boy, I'll tell you what, that was just pure gold to him. He loved that boy. And... Oh my God, he loved his dad. Oh my gosh. It was really cute. But I thought you might get a kick out of...

EH: Is that your daughter?

SC: No, that's my first cousin who recently passed away. She was like a sister to me and this was her daughter who passed away.

EH: I see.

SC: But let me see. These are older ones. This is on the White side of the family. This is the White side, this is the Jarrett side—Charlesie (sp?), Pauley...

EH: Okay.

SC: But those... I wanted you to see the Campbell pictures mostly. Did you know that I, going through my old stuff, I forgot--remember the woman I told you that played the piano?

EH: Mmhm.

SC: Forgot she... she wanted to write my life story.

EH: Oh!

SC: And I was very sick at the time. And I've had a lot of illness in my life. But anyway, she'd pay me a little bit every week, you know, and she worked, and I opened the drawer up and there was that—it's still almost all in handwriting, but it's a manuscript of the majority—pretty much all my life. Is that not something?

EH: Wow! Where is she? Do you know?

SC: She was in Oklahoma City the last I knew. Her name is Jean Oldham.

EH: Okay.

SC: And see, I couldn't even think of Jean's last name, but I found that stuff and I found a piece of music, if I can find it. Let's see if it's in here. I never know... (shuffles through papers) That's something I wrote called "Behind These Locked Doors." I had a nervous breakdown when I was in my teens.

EH: Oh, yeah.

SC: Yeah. But I went through a lot. I'm kinda lucky to even be here.

EH: Yeah. Yeah.

SC: But, let me see. I've got stuff somewhere. I found another notebook [of her original songs and poems] and I'm not even sure if it's... I think it's all different I'll tell ya. Yeah, it is, it's different. (shuffles through papers)

EH: Yeah, these look a little bit later.

SC: Hm? Yeah. Mmhm. More current, yep. But I got to thinking about that song that Grandpa Jones and Ernest Tubb recorded and I thought, I wrote those probably when I was 14, 15.

EH: Wow.

SC: Yeah. I lost a lot of things along the line because of daddy dragging me around, you know? And my mother had gone into the mental institution, and she died there. In Huntington.

EH: Uh-huh. Oh yeah.

10:55

SC: And...

EH: I'm just gonna hold this.

SC: And when my dad moved, he'd just get up and go! And whatever was there got left behind. Boy, it would just break my... I couldn't even take what little songs or whatever I'd written, you know. So...

EH: So you may have lost a lot.

SC: Oh, I DID lose a lot! There's no doubt in my mind. Cause I started writing songs when I was about probably 8 or 9. And the first one I wrote, I told mom, I said, "listen mama," and I started singing it and she told me, you stop that. I couldn't understand! She didn't want any... and it was what daddy did, see?

EH: Right. Yeah.

SC: And I didn't even know that!

EH: Yep.

SC: And oh man, she didn't want to hear it. She said honey, you know that's no good. Boy that was DEVASTATING!

EH: Oh yeah, that's confusing for a kid.

SC: Yeah, you're not kidding! And I think I was just probably a whole lot like my daddy as a child because I was not a very good little kid (laughs). I was always into things. But I wasn't supervised either, so...

EH: Yeah.

SC: But oh my God...

EH: Well I had... I went through some and I had a few questions.

SC: Okay.

EH: One of the ones... the "I Saw the Buffalo Creek Flood" song? And I was wondering if you could tell me about that?

SC: Well, I wasn't there. But my family was. Part of my family. It was a White. It was Goldie, which was grandmother White's daughter and her husband. And then her daughter and her husband—there were 4 or 5 kids involved. I don't know how, but they did get out. And it was like—they tell me that the water was lapping up the back of their heels as they went up the mountainside. And you know the amount of people that died. They were very fortunate. And they were in the mountains, but I believe it was a Thursday when they came out of the mountains from wherever they were, but yeah... I saw it on the... I was in... I had gone to Oklahoma by then. That was my first year, and I saw it on the news.

EH: Wow.

SC: And called back here and they were still missing, you know, and I was just stunned. We had—my dad and I had actually lived there, on the other... we probably. I don't know... we probably would have



died. Because I believe if I'm right the side of the...it was the old coal mine houses and we were—nobody lived in it and we just batched in it, and I believe that's the side the water came down—the side that we lived on.

EH: Wow.

SC: But yeah, that's... I mean it wasn't a firsthand account or anything.

EH: No, but still, I mean, just that it affected your family members.

SC: Very much, yes. This...I found this—I had forgotten about this. Ola Belle wrote this to me.

EH: Wow!

SC: And it's April 21, 1966 and she just wrote me a little, I don't know, a few pages. I thought this might be something you'd like to have any copy or something, you know?

EH: Yeah! Almost exactly 50 years ago, right?

SC: Yeah, it would be.

EH: 66?

SC: April 21, 1966.

EH: Wow. So was it just a letter?

SC: Sorta, yeah. It was just her thoughts and it was very sweet.

EH: That's so neat.

SC: Yeah, I think I had... I guess I had left and gone. I just can't remember. There was so much going on, but they finally took me in, but I think this was before they took me in. And I was just floating on the ocean, you know? They were beginning to get a picture of what was going on with my dad.

EH: Yeah.

SC: And he would get very very drunk and come up in front of Campbell's Corner and expose himself and then tell...He'd say he'd kill me and he'd kill them and he'd burn 'em up as they slept. Yeah. The typical today's stalker. Just typical. And... I was so humiliated. So hurt. And I loved those people and I didn't want anything to happen to them, and it would be all my fault, you know?

EH: Yeah.

15:13

SC: That's what... and I'll never forget Ola Belle and her sister Mary and daddy had come up and done that in front of the window and I felt like... I just wanted to die.

EH: Yeah.

SC: And they got... and then they got up and they said, "We've seen better ones than that!" (laughs)

EH: (laughs)

SC: And I went "Oh my God!" I couldn't believe... they said, "Put it away"... and I couldn't believe it, you know, they were making light of it, you know, and telling him, you know, "We ain't afraid of you,

we'll whoop the street with you, come brush the street up with ya." And I went oh my God! I'd never been around that.

EH: Especially women.

SC: Two women! And they were trying to comfort me, you know, and it did. It did. I think right then's when I knew, "I think I wanna stay here, I do." They said, "Don't worry about him. We won't let him hurt you, and he sure ain't gonna hurt us!" I said, well alright then.

EH: (laughs) Wow!

SC: (laughs) But I think, I think... she was, this would give you a little bit of insight into her and her thinking and stuff.

EH: Yeah. So is Anita your...

SC: That's my middle name, Shirley Anita, yeah.

EH: So your dad probably had mental illness?

SC: (Sighs) If I had a choice, I'd tell you he was just a demon. He just was evil and you know, he spent the majority of his life in prison in Moundsville, and he was a sexual freak. And I... but he was mean too. He beat my mother just terribly. And you know, she was, now she was mentally ill, and he took great full advantage of that. And you know, he was always hurting her and stuff. And we were up some holler—we were always living in old empty houses. We were up some holler and boy, I can't remember where it was. I think it was in Clay County somewhere, and daddy had hurt her—hit her with a hammer actually. And then he'd taken off and gone up the mountains just 'cause he knew somebody would probably call the cops or something. So I went out and I looked everywhere and I was convinced he was gone. And I said mom, please come on... and she was like a child kinda. So I thought, I'm gonna try to get her out of this old holler and get her somewhere, you know. And we had just got out the door maybe 10 steps and he came screaming down off that hillside. And he had an old butcher knife in his hand, you know. And he knocked me down. And he put it right... you know, he straddled my chest and just put it right on my throat as hard as he could and just said, "Now breathe, bitch."

EH: Oh my God.

SC: And I was probably eleven?

EH: Jeez!

SC: Somewhere about that. And it didn't really... if you could look into the eyes of someone like that, there's nothing quite like it.

EH: Yeah. Wow.

SC: But that book I was telling you about—I was just glancing through some of it, you know, and I thought, oh it brought back... I had brought back memories I'd sort of let go of, cause we really went in depth trying to make this thing real, you know, and it made me remember things like that, I'd kinda put way back.

EH: Yeah. Wow.

SC: You might have to do that for me [open bottled water]. My hands are not very good.

EH: Yeah, sure. Here ya go.

SC: Thank you, honey.

EH: Um... Oh, yeah. Also, cause you were talking a lot about—oh you called them “praise songs,” so like spiritual songs.

SC: Mmhm.

EH: So I was wondering what role that...

SC: Religion is in my life?

EH: Yeah, yeah, and...

SC: I was raised Methodist and it... in my... I don't think anybody didn't go to church when I was growing up. It just was the main community action. Everybody got together. So I went to church every Wednesday and Sunday as a child—it was just a part of life! And it always stayed a part of me, and I think I needed it even worse because of what was going on with me. And daddy HATED that! Oh my God he hated that. He would...this was... he come in the church one night drunk and he'd sit there and spit on the floor and stuff, you know, and hawk... OH! My God. So...anything to humiliate me and out of the church. And it worked generally. This was back before I was with the Campbells, so I didn't have any support. And I didn't want people to go through that, you know. But yeah, the church, religion, Jesus... Jesus I guess, just primarily is a huge part of my life in my life right now. I don't go to church and things, but I'm a really spiritual person.

EH: Yeah.

SC: Yeah. I think it's probably saved my life many times! Saved my mind.

EH: Yeah, totally. I think that was big for my mom too.

SC: Yeah.

EH: Not so much organized religion but it was spirituality.

SC: Right! That's right. It began as organized religion and then...I got very interested in everything, every kind of religion and I'd look into 'em and I'd go no, that's not there. I'd know when it was and when it wasn't. And then of course you go through the rebellion stage too. You feel like God let all this happen to you, you know, so I'm gonna go over to the dark side. And you know, Ouija boards and stuff like that.

EH: (laughs)

SC: (laughs) Well that wasn't fun! That brought on its own—a new set of problems! (laughs)

EH: (laughs)

SC: I don't wanna fool with anymore of those things. (laughs) I like the show Ghosthunters and that stuff on TV, but I couldn't have it.

EH: Yeah. And...I don't know—were there ever moments when you wanted to perform your music?

SC: Yeah, especially when I was young. Yeah. I did. But more than anything I really wanted to...as I aged I didn't. Because I watched some of the people going through the park [the country music park Ola

Belle and her husband ran] you know, at the time. And they I don't know...a lot of them were in turmoil. Or they were heavily addicted to something or they... and I thought, well that doesn't... I thought it would bring me great joy. I don't think it does. And as I aged, I thought I don't think it does. But it would bring me great joy just to hear my music performed. It was gratification, you know. But yeah, sorta I wanted to when I was young, but I don't think it was a big drive. I just wanted to create more so than perform.

EH: Mmhm. Yeah, I was thinking about that. I saw...

SC: I actually played with a little band in...where was I? I was in Maryland.

EH: Okay.

SC: Yep. I can't even remember what it was called. Yeah, and they gave you free drinks and (laughs) and I'd lose my... I lost it, honey. I'd take some drinks and I couldn't remember nothing. I had a bad experience with—oh what was that one (hums) I can't think of the name of it now, but boy it was one of those with just lots of words to it, you know, and I just went blah (nonsense words).

EH: Yeah, it's hard enough when your nervous.

SC: Yeah, it is.

EH: I mean you know, maybe 1 drink gets you past that, but... (laughs)

SC: I wouldn't get to stopping—I think I kinda got that from daddy.

EH: Yeah. When I saw Dwight Yokum last weekend—2 weekends ago—and I was just thinking like...and then I saw another up and coming country artist like last year and I was just like—you know, is this really fun for him? And this guy, he's like late 20s, just had a child, has a young wife. And he had worked so hard and finally got this fame and it was like now you're almost too old and you have a child and you're going from town to town playing the same songs every night, there's no creativity...

SC: Oh my God. No, there's not.

EH: Is that actually...is there a point when you realized, oh my dream isn't actually what I...

SC: What I thought it was.

24:21

EH: Yeah.

SC: And the 20s, I think anything pre-twenties and early 20s is when you still think it's—this is it, you know, I've made it. I think there's a lot of, frequently a lot of tragedy in country music singers lives and for me I was just looking for joy. Just any form of joy. Or any form of something to say, you're okay, your valuable, you did good. Look! You needed something. And I think that happens to a lot of these country performers. And then it just beats 'em to death. And then they're—everything they have left in there is being given to the audience now, and they just don't have anything left.

EH: Yep.

SC: That's hard.

EH: Yeah. I was talking to another West Virginian—do you know Roger Bryant? He’s from Logan. He’s like in his 60s. But you know, he did the thing—he said I’m gonna do this until I’m 30. And he actually did it until he was 31 and at that point he had 2 kids, 2 little babies at home. And he was like, I think that was good. And I worked a real job and now I can get retirement and I still have the joy of music, you know. I still like to write songs, but if I think I had gone the Nashville route, I think I would have lost the joy and would have lost myself.

SC: He probably would have. He probably would have.

EH: Yeah.

SC: I think he would. Not too many people have that kind of foresight, I don’t think.

EH: But yeah, so how many songs do you think you’ve written? Hundreds?

SC: Honey? Yes. I do think so. Especially when I got to thinking over this past week of the ones I’ve lost. I just—I would love to look back on ‘em now. I would love to! Did you by any chance, did you find “Troubles In A Bottle?” Do you remember that?

EH: I remember you talking about it. I didn’t find it in there.

SC: Okay, so not in there. I’m really hoping I...

EH: I don’t think! It’s not... well, we could look because they’re all pretty well alphabetized.

SC: Right.

EH: Oh you know, this was only ‘til “M”.

SC: Yeah, this is the other one.

EH: Okay, okay.

SC: Let me see. I don’t remember what numbers. (leafs through scrapbook)

27:07

It’s not here. Boy, I’m gonna be heartbroken if I just... if I don’t have a copy of that. I don’t even know. But that... that song probably. It’s you know, it’s one of your standouts in your mind. Maybe not as far as talent goes, but emotion. And we, daddy, again, we were in an old abandoned farmhouse and it was on Fenwick Mountain, and this old farmer let us stay there. He had cows, and he even had hay in that place, you know, where we... and at that time it was the last place my mother lived with us. And she was just like a, like a little imbecilic child by then, she really would wander off, stuff like that. And I would cook for her. And she’d say, “I’m not eating that. It’s poison. I saw you put the poison in.” And that—I was still a child and I couldn’t imagine why mother would insist that I poisoned her food. It hurts me now to think about it, you know. But that’s where we were and daddy—I had a little cot by a window, and the windowpane wasn’t even in it, it had a little cardboard—it was cold, girlfriend. That wind whips up there on Fenwick Mountain. And it was in the winter... and daddy had gotten through just abusing me, you know, and it was dark and there was a little shelf over in the corner and I looked over there and there were some old timey medicine bottles and stuff and I think I told you I wished I could put my troubles in that bottle and just seal it up. And that’s when, from there that’s the song. And that was a very bleak moment in my childhood. Very bleak. And it’s burned in my brain, you know? But the song—the song doesn’t really depress me or anything, but it was very meaningful.

EH: And it was—you were probably 9 or 10 at that point?

SC: Something like that, yeah.

EH: So maybe it was like one of the first ones too.

SC: Yeah, it would have been in that grouping, probably. I think my first one was probably about 8. And I was crazy for rock ‘n’ roll music when I was... It was true rock ‘n’ roll you know. And it wasn’t so much the—I just loved to hear it! And the words you know? Oh my gosh. I thought that was awesome. I think that actually kind of...that bluesy rock ‘n’ roll type stuff is what first inspired me to begin writing.

EH: Like Chuck Berry sort of stuff?

SC: Yeah! That kind of stuff. All of it.

EH: It probably was so different than... to hear that on the radio and just be so different.

SC: Well country has become what rock ‘n’ roll was then.

EH: Yeah, oh yeah.

SC: And you know. And country then was pretty much just bluegrass. I liked it, but it didn’t move me so much like rock ‘n’ roll did.

EH: Yeah

SC: I figure surely, surely somewhere I’ve got.

EH: And you think, you probably just remember that? You wrote it kind of just like...

SC: I can remember, it goes (sings) “I have troubles I don’t tell, but I guess it’s just as well. I have no one who really cares for me. Sometimes my soul aches and my heart breaks but I keep it to myself. I keep my troubles in a bottle on the shelf.” And there’s more to it but I can’t remember. I can remember that though.

EH: Uh-huh. I can hear a little bit of Ola Belle influence.

SC: You know I hear that, people tell me that, and I think... I don’t think it’s her influence so much as we always just—“Boy you two sure are...” They always thought I was her kid.

EH: Wow.

SC: Always.

EH: ‘Cause you wrote that before you knew her.

SC: Oh way before, yeah. Yeah, probably 15, probably 14, somewhere around there. My time with my daddy was short. It felt like 20 years.

EH: Oh yeah.

SC: I look back and I think jeez, that’s only a year apart. But it felt like 10, you know? He came home, you know I swear...I think I was 11 by the time he came home. So yeah, I was because I’d already started writing music and was wanting to learn to play the guitar. Somebody bought me one of those little toy ones, you know. But he... so he probably came home when I was around 11 and I was away from him by the time I was 15, 16. But honey, I can’t hardly tell you that and believe it!

EH: Yeah, yeah.

SC: I just can't... what I went through with him and we hitchhiked all over this eastern seaboard and stuff and he knew somebody everywhere he went and he would freeloader off of them, literally, until they threw him out and I'm stuck there with him. And I don't know.

EH: Well probably all the trauma would do that, you know? Stressful.

SC: Right. I had already had so much. I thought he was gonna be my savior. And you know how a kid idolizes the missing parents. And that's what—I thought he was great. I thought he was, you know, they were just being—typical child thought. Someday he'll come home and he'll save me from this and oh my God. I was so happy when he came back, I thought. And my grandmother Jarrett was still alive, but she was in her dying processes. She was bedfast and stuff. She had gone blind and she said, "Jack, have you turned your life around?" "Oh yes." Oh, what a con man he was. And he said, and she was so worried about me. And he said, "I'm gonna take care of her now, don't worry. I'm gonna take..." She said, "Oh Jack, I'm so grateful. I'm so thankful," you know. But she died with that thought and I'm so glad.

34:00

EH: Yeah.

SC: She believed he turned around and was gonna love and care for me.

EH: Yeah.

SC: Couldn't have died with a greater delusion, but...

EH: Right.

SC: Yeah.

EH: And so you would just keep some songs in your head? If you couldn't write them down?

SC: Mostly, mostly. Yeah, and then I wrote 'em down. Almost always wrote 'em down. They would come to me, a whole song would come to me, and then when I had a chance to have paper and pencil, I'd put 'em down. And but then when daddy would go, it would be like—it could be in the middle of the night or anything. I don't know if he was doing criminal... I don't know what made things like that happen. He'd just come in and he'd say, "We're gone, let's go." And I can remember one time that, it was that time he put that knife to my throat, you know. That was living there in that same place. And I had a little box I'd been keeping my papers in, and I said, "Daddy please let me take my music." And he said "You can't do nothing," and we went and there it lay. I mean for years, I swear for years I wanted to go back and get... 'cause it was kinda everything I had up until he came back, you know. 'Cause I'd managed to keep it that long. But oh, all the previous years were gone when he did that. I tried so hard to remember 'em. But I just couldn't as the years went by. I just couldn't anymore.

EH: Maybe someone has it somewhere.

SC: Hmm?

EH: Maybe somebody found it.

SC: Yeah, it wouldn't mean anything to anybody else. Plus I think they were kinda kid...probably kid-ish, you know. I don't really know!

EH: Yeah.

35:40

SC: This is one you didn't have yet, right?

EH: Oh, I don't.

SC: You know, there's a couple of songs in here... if I have...that Daddy and I wrote together.

EH: Oh wow.

SC: Yeah. I thought of that last week. I thought, you know, I do have a couple that we wrote together. And he was talented. There's no... I mean, it's a shame, 'cause I think he could have been somebody. But I don't remember...I can't remember the names of 'em right now. But when I come across them, I'll tell ya. I'll be sure and let you know. What else do you want to do now? Play checkers or?

EH: (laughs)

SC: (laughs)

EH: Well we could go... well do you want to sing any?

SC: Do what?

EH: Do you want to sing any?

SC: I don't know if I do or not.

EH: If, you know, we don't have to. We can wait.

SC: I don't know what I feel like.

EH: We could go through...I think we actually went through some of these, because I remember some of them like "Televangelist" so maybe we...

SC: Right, those aren't songs though.

EH: Oh right, some poems.

SC: Yeah, I think probably most of this is poems.

EH: Hello! (to coworker Mike Keller)

MK: Hello, just ignore me.

EH: Mike's gonna take a photo of this, of us interviewing.

SC: Oh.

EH: If you need us to move anything on the table, we have a lot of...

MK: No.

EH: Oh, okay.

MK: Go ahead.



SC: So is that all the questions you had from...?

EH: Yeah, from going through here, yeah, but I thought maybe we could, you know, page through some of these and if some stories...

SC: Here's one we wrote together, me and dad.

EH: Really?

SC: Mmhm. It's real hard to sing. But I'll sing it and try to do you like a little bit so you understand.

EH: Sure, yeah.

SC: (sings) "We met and fell in love with each other, we swore it would last throughout eternity. Then one day you found another and suddenly there was no one left but me." And that, and that... "I'm blue, I'm blue because I still love you." That would be daddy's. He would write like that, "I'm blue, I'm blue."

EH: Oh, uh-huh.

SC: "I won't try and blame you my darling. I guess that was... what was meant to be will..." Aw, see, "I guess what was meant to be will be. I know that I will never love another for now there is no one left but me." There you go, see I got his name down there too.

EH: Oh yeah!

38:33

SC: I didn't even notice that today. Daddy, usually wrote the tunes to his songs and I couldn't work with his tunes! (laughs)

EH: (laughs) Ranges?

SC: Different... we had different chords that we... Yeah, uh-huh.

EH: So that would be like a duet? Like you would sing one part?

SC: I don't think so... no. We just wrote it together. More the words together. And I would think, hey, this line would go good there, you know.

EH: Uh-huh.

SC: But there was one—I'd like to find that other one that daddy wrote because. Did you look up, by any chance, did you try to find the last song of Ernest Tubbs?

EH: Um, I don't think I did. But you think it was the last one, like the last hit?

SC: I KNOW it was.

EH: Okay.

SC: That song was the last hit. But you know we never even heard of him hardly ever again. And Herb always said, he got... that's what he gets. 'Cause he just kinda went (makes burn-out sound). Flash in the pan. (laughs)

EH: Yeah, it's true. (laughs) I'll have to look it up.

SC: Alright. I would love for you to do that.

EH: Yeah, yeah.

SC: Cause I think I'd recognize it if I could see it again, but it's just gone in my mind. It's just gone.

EH: Well I did, 'cause I found that one and I found "My Darling's Not My Darling Anymore." That one was good!

SC: Yeah, now that was Grandpa Jones' last hit. But I don't know... I don't think... surely it wouldn't be credited to me. I do want you to look again and see...

EH: Yeah, I'll look again on my phone just now, or once we

SC: Did you save it somewhere or something.

EH: I just did a search. But I did find a YouTube and it was like you know, they just have the visual of the record spinning around. But I think it said...or maybe it was on Discogs. And I thought it said S. White. But I dunno.

SC: I can't imagine. 'Cause he came to visit dad at that time in prison.

EH: And also you should be getting royalty checks for that if it's in your name!

SC: Yeah, I doubt...probably the, probably the last 25 years we made 6 bucks, probably.

EH: Yeah, I bet. All my musician friends are like, got 50 cents!

SC: Right.

EH: From ASCAP.

SC: I don't know if I have anything else that really... (shuffles through papers) I don't know. Oh yeah, we read that one.

EH: Yeah, "The Spider," Yeah.

EH: Pisces.

SC: Yeah, boy.

EH: Are you into astrology?

SC: Oh I was you know, in my youth. I was into a little dab of everything, you know. Well you gotta sample things to figure out what's what. I sure did that. Oh, I don't think I'll find that. I wish I could find that. I thought I might put it in the wrong place or something. And I wanted to find that one I told you... I think I told you I wrote in Oklahoma City, "The Rose." There was... I had to spend some time in a homeless shelter, you know, and I'd made friends with an elder, you know?

EH: I think that is in there, yeah.

SC: Rose. And what was it called? Something Rose.

EH: Me and Rose? Or it was like Lady Rose or something like that?

SC: Me and Lady Rose, yeah.

EH: I think it is in here.

SC: I can't remember what I titled it, though!

EH: Yeah! There it is. Lady Rose.

SC: Oh that was awful good. See I wanted you to read that. Did you read it?

EH: Yep, mmhm.

SC: It's good isn't it? (laughs)

EH: Uh-huh. I like that one.

SC: It's a good.

EH: Do you want to read it? Read it for the tape.

SC: Yeah! I'd love to. "No one shares our loneliness, no one really knows, what Southwest fourth and Northwest eighth are me and Lady Rose. I up on the South side writing poetry, she up on the North side with dreams of things to be. I with life and youth and health, while old and grey is she, still we share a common bond, Lonely Rose and me. I drank with her from bitter cup that comes from poverty and in the darkness we would walk the streets, just Rose and me. I slowly struggled with the plight that lay in front of me, but Rose she only rocked and talked of things I couldn't see. I know that we may just go our way, that someday soon we'd part, and Northwest eighth would 'ere become a little of my heart. Was Rose was old and with her age it borrowed from her mind. So what was there played games and left reality behind. Yes, here in January's world, one flower dies, one grows. A fresh young tender buttercup, an old and bitter Rose."

EH: That's really nice.

SC: I think that's so... I really like it. Yeah, but that's where I met her was in the Salvation Army in Oklahoma City, and she was wacko. And I loved her! (laughs) I just loved her! And she had nowhere to go, and I was able to get a little apartment, you know. So I moved her in. She would just... "Well we're gonna go get your son and then I'll take care of him for ya." We were just gonna do everything (laughs) and she really cheered up my life! (Laughs)

EH: Wow, that's great!

SC: And then she'd get mad if I went out at night. (laughs) And she said, she'd be up wide awake, "Where have you been?" (beats on table) "You know you gotta get back to this house!"

EH: And how old were you? In your twenties?

SC: Oh, but 22. Yeah. And she was probably 76. (laughs)

EH: That's unlikely. An unlikely match.

SC: That's a great story. But I loved her!

EH: So I took this all home one night and read through all of them and I read this one and thought, "what's this about?" And then I remembered you told me a story about her in an interview.

SC: Well this one, do you wanna take this one this time?

EH: Yeah, so I'll take that one.

SC: You want this stuff, right?

EH: Yeah, I want... I would love to have that

SC: I think it'd be good if you had this copy of these photos. See I doubt Jerimy's ever seen that. He'd get a kick out of that.

EH: Is it okay if I send him stuff?

SC: Yes, yes of course.

EH: Okay (laughs)

SC: Did that fall out or did I have it separate? See that's the one I was telling you. That's the song I was telling you, I really wish somebody would you know, that it's the Christian song I'd love to hear it performed in church? I can't hardly sing that one.

EH: Well maybe that's, that must have not been in there, so I can copy that one and then we'll put it back in that one next time.

SC: Yeah.

EH: Let me just before you go, let me look up this. (sound of door slamming) Let's see, "My Darling's..."

46:43

Okay, let's see.

SC: You know I think I probably in the moment wanted to be a writer, more than anything else.

EH: Really?

SC: Yeah. I know I did. I actually had taken some journalism and stuff. And yeah, I think in the end. I loved the music, but I liked the poetry as well and I liked creating little short stories and things like that, I and I think that probably would have been my greatest desire.

EH: Did you ever write any stories?

SC: Oh, sorta. (laughs) You know, by the time I seriously started wishing I could be a writer, I was already too disillusioned to... do you want to copy any of these pictures or not?

EH: Oh, I would love to.

SC: Oh, okay.

EH: If you don't mind leaving them.

SC: No, no, no. I don't mind. There's just—is it just as easy to copy them right out of the thing like this, or would you like me to take out the ones you need?

EH: Well you can leave 'em in there, cause that will just protect them.

SC: You'll know what you want, right?

EH: Yeah. (Finding search results for song). Well it definitely says White. You want to listen to it? I'm trying to see what it says...

SC: (sings) “My Darling’s Not My Darling Anymore.” I even know it pretty good.

EH: Come on! (plays song) I guess it says Jones/White. But I’ll have to...

SC: What’s it say?

EH: Jones/White.

SC: Jones?

EH: Grandpa Jones, I guess.

SC: Oh, yeah. That’s it, yep. That’s it! Yeah. Well he wrote that for my mom.

EH: And is that how he played it, your dad?

SC: Well, no. That’s the... but that’s bluegrass. He didn’t sing it like... He’d sing it like I would sing my songs.

EH: Yeah. Like more sentimental?

SC: By far, yeah. You know I’ve never heard this before?

EH: Really? Wow!

SC: Not by him! I’ve heard daddy sing it, but...

EH: Well yeah, sure.

SC: Good dobro.

EH: Yeah, I like that swing beat.

SC: Sounds good, doesn’t it?

EH: Yeah.

SC: Well I like that a lot better than what he did with mine. A lot better. Sounds pretty good!

EH: Yeah! It’s a good two-step song.

SC: Huh?

EH: It’s a good two-step song.

SC: Yeah! I love watching the two step. I can barely walk, but I sure love watching it done. I love dancing. I think it’s great.

EH: Oh yeah. Did you ever go to the Pythian Hall on the West Side? They have the West Side Jamboree on Fridays and Saturdays.

SC: I’m just so disabled I can’t hardly do anything. I feel very fortunate just to stay home (laughs).

EH: (laughs) Yeah.

SC: I always... my daughter can do that.

EH: Well do you... you have email and internet right?

SC: Yeah, you want me to write down my email?

EH: Yeah, 'cause I could just send you the link.

SC: Oh, that'd be great. Yeah.

EH: Here, let's finish it out. But yeah, I like to go there. And when my friends and I go, we're the youngest. We stand out, cause they're like "How did YOU find out about this?" Because everyone's like 70.

SC: (laughs) That's funny!

EH: And they can all dance circles around us.

SC: Oh I'll bet! I guarantee it! That's great. That's just great. See I wouldn't have any clue where to look for something like that.

EH: Yeah. Well I'll have to find how they credited it because I thought I saw S. White, but I dunno. I'll see if I can find it. But I'll send it to you.

SC: I guarantee. I just don't think there's any chance in the world. But see dad, I told you about dad, dad always swore his name was Jack B, but his name was Beverly Jack. And I said, why did grandma name him Beverly? And he said the oldest daughter of the family, his sister, married a Beverly Jack, and they named him after, daddy after him. But I guess at one time Beverly was a male name, like Shirley was a male name.

EH: Or Ashley was, you know, a man's name.

SC: That sounds more male than Beverly or Shirley though, I think.

EH: Yeah.

SC: When I first found out Shirley was originally a male name, I was just dumbfounded. (laughs)

EH: I know, yeah.

SC: I was just—oh my God. And then daddy, I said what, and somehow he convinced mom to name me that and it was a girlfriend of his!

EH: Oh that's weird.

SC: Isn't that dirty? That's just dirty. And then I found out, I was supposed to have a sister. And my cousin that I lost, you know. She told me and I said, you're kidding me. She said, yeah, your daddy... she was born about the same time you were. I said no kidding. So she sent me up one of these hollers. I can't think of the name of it right now, where she was from, and I found the person, and this, and they said, come back at 6:00 and we'll talk to you. And I went back and that whole place was locked down. They had drawn the shutters, and I said, "You guys told me to come back!" And this, the woman opened the door just a little bit and said, "Don't ever come back. Go away and don't ever come back." I thought, how strange. People just weird me out, you know?

EH: Yeah, wow.

SC: I don't get it. What in the world is the big deal? It happened, right?

EH: Right, yeah, I know.

SC: Like maybe she didn't know, that's what I got to thinking. Maybe they were lying to her throughout her.

EH: Or they were trying to hide it.

SC: Yeah, that's what I... they were probably married and she probably believes that guy's her dad and don't know any different and.

EH: Yeah, totally.

SC: I thought, oh my God.

EH: Or she might have some suspicion and not really want to know the truth.

SC: Well I sure was disappointed.

EH: Oh, well maybe another—so I made a few notes on some of the songs that stuck out, but one of the things I noticed is you have a lot of songs about writing itself. And how writing is--well maybe it's not a song--some of them are poems. But just about how writing. Well there are some where, oh it's just this trivial thing, but it's therapy and it's catharsis and that sort of thing.

SC: It is. I mean I always felt... I just think I'd be a blithering idiot if I... if God hadn't given me this talent. And it seems like he didn't just give me talent, but he gave me insight. And so many things. And I don't really sometimes know how I got through. So many things have happened to me that some people don't recover from one of those things happening you know? But [there were] just the right people at the right time in my life and then again my faith. I leaned on that heavily.

EH: And I think sometimes—and maybe this is something writers have too—is a perspective and you're able to see it happening to someone... as if it were happening to someone else, with some kind of remove.

SC: That's true. It's true, you do. 'Cause you can literally sit back and play it and watch the whole thing happen again, or... and you don't necessarily feel the attachment to it. You're trying to understand how this thing developed. How it happened, how did it played out like this, and let's don't do this again, or whatever, let's don't let that happen. But yeah. And there's a part of the mind I think... the same part of the mind that's stimulated by the writing and the poetry that also has that some little special thing going there that helps them understand things in a different way. I don't want to sound like oh gee, I'm so much better—I'm not trying to do that. It's just that we see things with a different eye.

EH: Yeah. I agree. And also, writing for me helps me figure out what I think.

SC: It does me too, yeah, it doesn't so much for me anymore, but it used to. It really used to. I would be set that this is how I feel, put it down on paper and go, I don't think I do feel like that.

EH: (laughs)

SC: (laughs) I mean I really don't! That doesn't look right. Say no, I don't think this is gonna work out, it doesn't make sense. And then sometimes I just insist that it go ahead and make sense because it's what I want to do (laughs).

EH: Well, yeah.

SC: But we're all guilty of that, aren't we?

EH: Oh yeah! But yeah, it's a good mirror and helps you process something. And now I understand it more.

SC: When you write, what do you write? Do you write just in general or poetry or...?

EH: Well I've always kept a journal. I think that's the main thing.

SC: Oh that's so important. I did too as a young person. Yep.

EH: But yeah, I've done little poems at certain points. Now I mostly do non-fiction stuff.

SC: That's a good thing and it's, and yeah I always remember our little discussion where you said, "I do this, I do this, and I do this and I get paid for it!" I loved that! I love that because there was a brightness in your eyes and in your voice that at that time was genuine. There was no doubt about it that you loved what you were doing.

EH: Yeah.

57:34

SC: And what's better than that? Nothing is better than that. A lot of people don't ever find that in their life. They just exist, you know?

EH: Or they go for money. I mean I'm never gonna make a lot of money.

SC: No, no, no. I'm in bad shape if that was true. I would have loved it! I mean I would have loved certainly a little more than what I've got. Feeding my cats right now is the hardest job I have. And I've always been a bigtime animal lover. Big time.

EH: Yeah. I'll have to show you a picture of my cat. (laughs)

SC: I'd have to get out an album. My whole... my house—all my walls are full of animal pictures. You know, that's something I was gonna do. I've always dabbled in a little bit of everything, and I dabbled in photography and stuff for a little bit. But I did have this one picture that I love a lot. And I was gonna bring it to show you...that I took, you know. I had... I've done a little bit of everything. I'm not kidding! Looking back, you know. You know I groomed [animals] for years and years and years. And when you groom you get an extension for animals, so I bred standard poodles for a little bit. Not very long. Just a little bit. And that came by somebody bringing me one that was almost dead and I nursed it back to health and love 'em you know. But I've got a picture of 3 standard poodles standing together, and they're at my friend's house and two of them are mine and one of them's hers. And they're looking out a plate glass with squirrels in the trees. And it's just a good picture. I love it. I'll have to bring it and show it to you.

EH: Bring it next time.

SC: You can photocopy that picture and put it in.

EH: Yeah, this cat I got up in Jackson County. There's a little shelter up there.

SC: Yeah, I've heard of it. It's a no-kill right?

EH: Well, I guess. According to Debby, they were trying to make it no-kill and they didn't get the funding...

SC: Oh man.



EH: So... I mean she was a kitten when I... she still is pretty young. But the kittens probably would have gone no matter what, but that's her—she has a little split face.

SC: Oh she's great! Oh my God she's great! I love her! Will you send me a picture of her on my email too?

EH: Sure, yeah.

SC: Oh I want Carly to see her!

EH: Her name's Wren like the bird

SC: Oh, she's...

EH: She's like a little rascal, so she needed...

SC: I've got one of these. She's exactly like that except for the face.

EH: Tortoiseshell?

SC: Yeah, a little Terty, and oh I just could eat her! She's just beautiful.

EH: She's got a lot of personality.

SC: Oh I bet.

EH: She is that face because it will be one extreme to the other. She will be totally naughty, running around the house, to cuddling on your lap.

SC: This torty is the same way. This little torty...I named mine Mildew.

EH: (laughs) That's adorable.

SC: I went into the vet's with her to have her fixed and they you know, what's her name, and there was a girl over here talking to her mother, adult lady, and she said, "What'd you say?" I said Mildew. And she said, "Oh I woulda never thought of that!"

EH: It's actually a cute word!

SC: Well, it is, I call her Mildy, or Mildred. And she looks like a little mildew towel, you know, something you threw back in the corner when you went swimming. But her little thing, she's actually a next door cat. But he got locked up in jail for 10 months. And there she was. And of course I took good care of her. She got knocked up and she had babies, they're for me. They're for me. And so now I've got... well one of the babies wound up feral, the other one's in one of my back rooms. 'Cause I had him fixed. But that's why stuff like this happens to me. It's not like I go out and hunt cats or anything. But she's got that same personality. Just a little devil! But she would be so sweet and then go stop it I'm tired of you. But that's exactly...I see it in her face! I see it!

EH: Yeah, she'll just lure you in.

SC: I think that's one of the most beautiful cats I've ever seen. Do you post her and stuff? Do you put her out there where cat lovers can see her?

EH: I do post online you know. She is just here I'll show you.

SC: Like Facebook? Do you put her on Facebook and stuff?

EH: Yeah, and Instagram.

SC: People need to be able to see her, it's just great!

EH: I know. This is just a 3-minute video. It's her in 3...3 seconds I mean.

SC: Okay. (gasps) I just think she's awesome! Oh honey, that's great! (laugh) Do you love her as much as you look like you do?

EH: Oh yeah, I do. I really think she understands humor. Because she'll just leap up in the air or act like she's gonna pounce and go bah! Like I scared her or something. It's funny.

SC: That's great. The longer you take animals seriously, and pay attention, the smarter you'll find out they are. I just can't believe that human beings are so stupid. That they think that little things don't have feelings, or just a cat, ugh!

EH: Oh yeah, well even—'cause I had a pet in high school, a cat, another tortoiseshell, and I took care of her a little but my parents really took care of her and this was the first one that I've had that's fully mine.

SC: Fully your responsibility, mmhm.

EH: And I feel like I have more, like I understand other animals better now. I have more empathy for other animals.

SC: You have to start somewhere. I don't care if you had a bird or what. You begin to go... look at the behavior. And they mourn. You know, and what is something recently, someone said somewhere that they're pretty sure dogs have emotions similar to humans. Oh these brilliant scientists, I'm so thankful for them! Isn't that awful? My dog just, oh he just twists me around my finger. He'll fuss at me. I have 3 dogs. Well my daughter's. I'm keeping my daughters pet but I also have 2 mixed weenie dogs, but they're (laughs) pumpkin dogs, really. But one is just, he won my heart. And he basically tells me when and where to go and I love it. And every night there's time for treats. And he'll look at me about 7:30-8:00 until I say what? Then it's on! But he'll keep going... and if I just look at him... Oh I LOVE IT! And when I say what? He'll say "I want one." That's what I taught him to say. "I want one."

EH: (laughs) Oh yeah, they...

SC: They bring joy to my life, Emily. I don't anything else could like they do.

EH: I know. I know.

SC: Oh I love your cat. I just love her. I want Carly to... Send me that little video and send me that...

EH: Yeah, I will.

SC: Yeah I want Carly to see her. Did I tell you my daughter's bipolar?

EH: Yeah.

SC: Yeah, she has a lot of problems. Yeah, she's alright, she's doing alright.

EH: Well that's good. Well she has you.

SC: Yeah she does. Aw, you know I thought all my life as a child, youth and all I went through. And then I had children! What was I thinking! What was I thinking!

EH: Well they turned out alright.

SC: Hmm? What did you say?

EH: I said well they turned out alright.

SC: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EH: I know it was—my mom was scared because she went through having an abusive stepfather and her brother had some mental issues, and she thought, oh am I gonna pass this down?

SC: Well, you know...

EH: You never know.

SC: No, you don't. You don't know. And you can't let yourself. There's certain things I think... I would probably have myself sterilized if I thought I was gonna pass down. But mental illness isn't one of 'em. But no. Jeremy and Carly both had addiction problems and stuff and I think, now that... I mean I had to fight addiction and I'm on a lot of strong pain medications now, but I don't have any problems with them. I don't want to get... I just want to try to have some relief. I live in such pain every day. That's why I can't... I have multiple diagnosis and the worse one I have is my back. It's a degenerative disk disease, you know? Nobody, except if they've been there could possibly ever know. And that person dealing with terrible pain like that a lot of times is you just don't want to go another day, you just don't. But my animals make the difference. See I look at them and I think, nobody depends on me but them, but they do. And what would they do? So gotta keep it going. And they make me laugh too. They really make me laugh.

EH: Well it's really healthy.

SC: Yeah, there's no doubt that people with animals would live much longer than people... if I was sitting up there in my condition, I can't even imagine my mental health without the animals.

EH: Yeah, I'd like to get... my grandmother has been alone now for 15 or 20 years. She did have a cat for a while and he died. And she's 80... She's gonna be 85 and I really would like to get her a cat, but I just don't know. Anyway. I just don't know how she would respond to it. But when I brought Wren home for Christmas, she was just in heaven. I have pictures of them cuddling.

SC: That's such a special little cat, though really it is. That's a special little cat. Who turned you on to her? You just happened...

EH: I was just...

SC: You just went out there and there it was?

EH: Well I was looking online at some of the photos at shelters in the area, cause I was like, oh maybe when I move to West Virginia I'll get a cat. I don't really know anyone and it would be nice to have a little companion. So I was just looking online and then I saw her face and I was like oh my gosh. And I was like, okay well I have to go meet her and see what her personality is like. And then in the crate, it was her and 2 siblings, and they were all sleeping, and I opened the crate and she just woke up and crawled out on my lap and was purring. And the other two just couldn't care less.

SC: They weren't tortys too were they?

EH: No, she was the only one. And they were just sleeping and didn't care about me. And I thought, this is a good sign. She's kind of choosing me. So I'll take her home.

SC: I had to—this one that I told you, that I care for now, I took her and got her spade while he was gone. After the babies were weaned, you know, and got her shots and stuff and she just, she don't want nothing to do with him at all. He said, "...be over there, over here" (laughs) Wonder why? He throws her a neck bone now and then."

1:10:29

END OF TAPE