Jimmy Carter Library & Museum

Oral History with Jack Carter

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SPEAKERS: Interviewee – Jack Carter
Interviewer - Dr. Martin I. Elzy - Jimmy Carter Library

TOPIC: Oral History

Side One of Tape 1

MARTIN ELZY: It's about 8 p.m. in the evening at The Carter Center. I'm Martin Elzy, Assistant Director of the Jimmy Carter library. I'm interviewing Jack Carter, the oldest child of President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter. Mr. Carter, have you recorded other oral histories, or written any articles about which we should alert the researchers who use this interview?

JACK CARTER: Not that I can remember.

MARTIN ELZY: All right, fine. I should say for the record, too, that we're accompanied, in this interview, by Jack Carter's wife, Elizabeth, who is with us, and we appreciate that.

Well, let me just start and get your full name on the record, and any family stories on how your name was selected.

JACK CARTER: John William Carter. And my mother's grandfather was named John William Murray. So that was how my name came to be.

MARTIN ELZY: And where and when were you born?

JACK CARTER: July 3rd, 1947, in Portsmouth Naval Hospital in Virginia.

MARTIN ELZY: And what were your folks doing there?

JACK CARTER: Dad was in the military. He was in the Navy, stationed at Norfolk.

MARTIN ELZY: And then where did you go to school, K through 12?

JACK CARTER: I believe I started in kindergarten up in New London – Schenectady, I believe. And then my grandfather died in 1953, and I came down to Plains and, as I recall, started the first grade in Plains in about the second or third month after they started into class. And finished high school there.

MARTIN ELZY: And by then, was Plains a 12-year system?

JACK CARTER: It was.

MARTIN ELZY: And any particular memories from growing up in Plains, particularly school, at this point?

JACK CARTER: I remember in the first grade, I believe, one of my schoolmates whose name I don't remember right now, died of polio, because it was right in '53 – 1953, probably. I remember that part of it. We also, much later on, won the Class C State Baseball championship, and I was on the team.

MARTIN ELZY: What position did you play?

JACK CARTER: I played centerfield at that time, and I batted 111, unfortunately. But the next year I had a great year, but we didn't do as well as a team.

MARTIN ELZY: Were the Plains schools integrated while you were in school there?

JACK CARTER: No. I graduated 1965, and the Plains schools were not integrated. At that time, there was still the lingering separate but equal, and there was another school in Plains which was relatively modern, compared to ours, in air conditioning and good books and everything, and that was for the black students. And it was all to reinforce the assumption that things were really equal, if not actually better, for the black students.

MARTIN ELZY: Was your father on the school board during the time you were in school?

JACK CARTER: Yes, when he got back – my grandfather, and again, I'm a little fuzzy on the details – my grandfather was in local politics, and I believe he was on the school board. And when he died, they appointed my grandmother to fill his unfulfilled term. And then when the next election came around, I believe dad ran for that office and got it. So he was on the school board probably in '54, '55, around that time. Which of course was before Brown v. Board of Education.

MARTIN ELZY: Do you remember any incidents around that? How did you feel as a student, with your dad on the school board?

JACK CARTER: I'm not sure it was – a lot of people ask me what I think about having a famous father. But the thing about it, it's the only one that you have, typically. And so whatever it is that you do seems to be pretty normal. You know, Dad was on the school board. But it never really impacted me at Plains. There were – we tended to be Democrats and tended to be, I guess, on the – at least, talk about, on the liberal side of it – at least where we grew up.

And so later on, in the – I remember, for instance, staying up late to watch Kennedy win in 1960 in TV, over at my grandmother's house – Grandmother Carter. And then in '64 – I was probably a junior in high school, and there were some incidents about, you know, us being for Johnson when a lot of people down there were for Goldwater.

But nothing – it was pretty, a very rural life. I worked in the peanut

warehouse all the time, and went to school, and we graduated 25 people. There were 18 boys in my class, and only 7 girls. So it so happened that disjointed amount of - you know, the genders – it was - we were pretty – we were pretty much an average size class all the way through. But all twelve grades were in one school, and there were probably 400 people in the school. So.

MARTIN ELZY: I see. Well, what was your relationship with your grandparents in Plains?

JACK CARTER: Both of my grand—- by the time we got to Plains, both of my grandfathers were dead. Miss Lillian Carter was my father's mother, and I got along with her very, very well, I think. She was – she was interesting and she's the one that ultimately went to the Peace Corps when she was 68 years old.

But she always liked me and I always liked her. I later found out that she had her favorites among the grandchildren, and if she didn't like you, then she didn't treat you very well [laughing]. But I was one of the favorites, and so that never – and so I – in fact, I found out much later – probably ten years after she died, that any of that was going on. But she tended to like the eldest children of each of her children, and the rest of 'em could just sort of fit where they wanted to.

Mother Allie, on the other side – Mother Allie Smith – was my – we called her Mother Allie – was my mother's mother. And she was just a neat woman. She worked in the post office there for years and years, and finally retired. She was a great cook. We always liked going over to her house.

My great-grandfather lived over there for – until he – probably in the 1960's – who I was named after. But he was a neat old gentleman that would give you a nickel or something whenever you went to see him, and would walk downtown every day, just to go down there and go back. But we liked to – she had – at one point, she had a milk cow behind her house. She was much more agrarian, I think, than my grandmother Carter was.

MARTIN ELZY: I see. What about the family business. You mentioned you worked in it?

JACK CARTER: Um-hmm. I made my first dollar at a dime an hour, when I was about 6 years old, keeping the office on a Saturday for dad, which meant answering the telephone when he had to go out and do something. And I worked for 10 hours that day and made a dollar, and it was a wonderful thing. That would have been 1953, I guess.

But I worked in the peanut warehouse for – for years. Every summer. You started off having to – later on, and you started off having to clean the place during the early summer, to get all the peanuts out, in preparation for the new harvest. And then you winded up having the peanut period, the peanut season, which started – it sort of changed over the years, but it was basically September and early October. In which case you just sort of worked until you couldn't work, and then went home and slept until you woke up and then went back.

But I ran the dryers and – I knew how to do everything down there except anything in the office, which I never did. Dad and Mom had all the air-conditioned stuff. And then we also had a fertilizer business, and an insecticide, pesticide, part of the business.

And so I would load and unload Land plaster by hand. They always seem to come in 11:30 on Saturday afternoons, Saturday mornings. They'd come in with 40 tons of Land plaster in 115-pound bags on a flatbed truck. And I and two or three other guys who – who worked there and made more than I did, would go down there and unload that trailer.

But I learned how to drive everything, and there was - you know, Bobcats and tractors and haul trailers around. Was a pin boy early, and raked corn down on drag belts. Learned how to back four-wheeler trailers with the front end of a tractor. It was fun.

MARTIN ELZY: I'm sure it was. I imagine it was a lot of work, too, though. I grew up in a rural area, although not on a farm. But for example, in your family, was there always a lot of concern about the weather?

JACK CARTER: Well, there probably was, but I don't know that it ever trickled down to me. To me, if the weather wasn't that good, I didn't have to work as hard later on, so - you know, I was just getting paid by the hour [laughing].

MARTIN ELZY: You weren't concerned about droughts.

JACK CARTER: No. But I do remember a couple of times when Dad was concerned about it. Because we obviously had peanuts growing – we tended to grow the seed peanuts for the seed, for the farmers, until two generations up. And so we were very much involved in the peanut business, from both the growing side and the storage side.

MARTIN ELZY: What were the expectations your parents had in regard to you, as far as discipline or work?

JACK CARTER: Dad sort of believed that if you were going to do something, you should do it to your absolute best, and I'm not sure that I ever particularly agreed with that. I felt that you could be much more diffuse in your life.

But it took me quite a while to sort of get to the point where I could justify to myself the way that I felt about things. But if you – I was expected to get A's in school, and if I got a B, I couldn't watch TV for a week. I think I got one C. But that was a horrible thing, and I made A's in that course for the rest of the time.

But there was - you know, he was a fairly demanding kind of a person, and no more, I think, than he would have done. But he wrote later on – the name of his first book was Why Not The Best? And he tells the story about Admiral Rickover, which I'm sure you know. And Rickover grilled him in his office and asked him, among many other things, asked him how he stood in his class, and Dad, I think, was in the top 10 – 5 or 10 percent. And was kind of proud of it.

And so when he told him where he stood, Rickover said, "Did you always do your best?" And Dad realized, of course, that he had not. And Rickover said, "Why not?" Which made Dad feel like he had really missed out on something. And so he named his first book, Why Not The Best?

And in my view, whenever you do one thing to the exclusion of something else, you get very, very good at it, but you exclude everything else. And so that has been sort of a philosophical difference that I've had with him for quite some time. It started back when I was in school.

MARTIN ELZY: Had you heard about Admiral Rickover and heard about this story before he wrote the book? I mean,is that something he said a lot to his kids?

JACK CARTER: I don't remember. I knew that he had worked for Rickover and was very impressed with the man. And we had some Navy books. In fact, I ultimately went to Georgia Tech and majored in physics, and it was largely because of some of the things that Dad had told about – about nuclear power in the submarines and things like that. But you know, he had – he was proud of being in the Navy, and he had his – I remember one big book on the – The Silence Service – I think it was what they had done in World War II, the Pacific operations – about the submarines over there, and they had various stories of 'em going – it was a great book. But he also had his physics books and stuff like that, that he got from Union College. Interesting things.

MARTIN ELZY: Now, this often happens in farm families – your father left home, did not take over the family business, but then came back to do that. Was there any indication to you, when you were growing up, that you were the oldest son and you should run the family business at some point? Or was there any --?

JACK CARTER: I think that I thought for years that that was a possibility, at least. And so it sort of gave you a little bit of freedom to go out and try something else, and then if you didn't -- you know, if you weren't successful at it, then you would have sort of a fall back.

And in fact, I thought that for many years, and then when he got out of office as President and sold the business to Golden Peanut, I was a little taken aback. Not that I wasn't already doing my own thing, and very likely would never have gone back to run it anyway, but it eliminated that possibility [laughing].

MARTIN ELZY: It was just a surprise that the business was no longer in the family, I would think.

JACK CARTER: That's right. Looking back on it, I'm glad he did it, because I think he probably sold that business at the top of the market.

MARTIN ELZY: What about church expectations for you as a child?

JACK CARTER: We went to church. We went to Sunday School and we went to church, and I think I sang in the choir for a while. I mean, it was a – it was a big deal. It was – it was a little church, for a while – not little for Plains. Baptist churches in the south are mainstream churches. On the other hand,

Baptist churches by their very being, are argumentative.

And in a county like Sumter, with maybe twenty thousand people, you could have two hundred Baptist churches. And in fact, we probably had - we've got two in Plains right now, not counting the Black churches that are also Baptist churches there. And we used to have only one, and what typically happens is, the church will not like a preacher or won't like some view that the deacons have taken, and so a small group will just spin off and start another one.

And so that argumentative streak that Baptists have was in me for a long time. And our church was relatively conservative, and the people who were the pastors there were not extremely well educated. And sort of went along on faith and what they believed about God. And I was – I was sort of growing up to be – well, I think Dad probably fostered having to stand on your own feet verbally, and I was fairly good at it. And so I had an interesting time at church. And basically, had some people who came in – particularly the ones who would come in on revival would be a little bit too conservative for me and could not understand it when I asked why Gandhi, for instance, was not going to go to Heaven.

MARTIN ELZY: Ah, I see.

JACK CARTER: [Laughing] Those kinds of things.

MARTIN ELZY: Well, what about your family's – just growing up, your favorite vacation trips, weekend relaxation, holiday traditions, things like that, that all families do, that might be interesting.

JACK CARTER: We used to go – Mom and Dad had two sets of friends in Plains. And I think the Wishards were one – B.T. Wishard. And Joel somebody – I can't remember right now. And B.T. Wishard, I think, was a fertilizer salesman, and would sell fertilizer. He lived in Americus. And Joel was a very wealthy farmer who lived, I think, several miles to the south of Plains.

But we would go on long vacations with 'em down – largely to Panama City. And just sort of rent a place over by the water -- you know, a motel. And the family would go down there. And they all had – I don't think Joel's family had any kids, but B.T. Wishard had a couple of kids who were about the same age as us. We'd go down to the beach. And we would do that pretty frequently.

And the other place we would go would be to Lake Harris, which is a fishing place in Central Florida. And it had a lot of bass and everything like that in it. And of course Mom and Dad would go out fishing all day long, and they would leave the kids on the shores, and we would play with alligators and things, which I'm sure they didn't know that we were doing.

And we'd always have a maid or somebody that would go with us, just to make sure that we didn't get in too much trouble, or at least have somebody to talk to going out. But it was – I think it was a fairly normal kind of life. I mean, I don't feel –

ELIZABETH CARTER: What about the camping trip to Washington, D.C.?

JACK CARTER: Oh, yes, now, that was a great one. When was that? That must have been maybe 19—well, we'd had two big vacations, I think. One was a camping trip to Washington, and it must have been '59 or '60 or something like that, so I was probably 12. And Chip was, I don't know, 9, and Jeff was 7 or something or like that. In fact, it may even have been younger than that. And we took out in a station wagon, I believe, with a tent, and Mom and Dad, and we left Plains and went over to east Georgia and saw the tobacco auctions, and then we drove by Savannah and Dad went over to – I think it was a military, a Navy, base in Savannah. And we went there, and everybody saluted him, and we were really impressed, because he was, I guess, in the Reserves.

And then we drove up – I think we went to Norfolk, and they saluted him again. I don't know why he kept doing that. But -- and we went out – we were in the mountains, camping all the time. And a black bear broke into our cooler, and ate the bacon, and sort of batted the thing around. So we were all impressed. The black bears used to come by with the trash dumps in the middle of the night. All this time the kids, and Dad, I'm sure, were having a great time. Mom, I think, was going downhill.

We wound up sleeping out on the beach in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, where we tracked sand into the tent. And when we finally got to Washington, Mom and Dad – one of the first arguments that I ever remembered – not very many, but – I can remember Mom saying that she was not going to sleep in a tent again. And so we wound up on the, I guess, south side of the Potomac in a Holiday Inn, and Dad said it cost us, I think it was, 24 dollars or something like that. And she said she did not care, she wasn't going to do it.

Anyhow, we wound up spending the night at the Holiday Inn while we were at Washington, D.C. And we went up on the top of the Holiday Inn that night, and you could see over the city, and see all the lights, everything lit up on it. It was a great experience. And we came back. I think we did camp out another couple of times. But that was the last camping trip we went on.

And the other thing we did – and this must have been '62 or '3. I think I was getting old enough to drive. But still, all five of us were going in this car. We drove to Mexico, and through the Southeast, and went in, in Brownsville, Texas, I believe. And drove all the way down to Mexico City and Acapulco and Teotihuacan, and just had a great time. And once again, sort of impressed with Dad, because he spoke Spanish. But that was another great sort of vacation memory.

MARTIN ELZY: Well, good, good. We got you up, I guess, to – well, let's go to 1962, when your father was elected to the State Senate. Were you active in that campaign?

JACK CARTER: On the periphery. I mean, I can remember that campaign, and the posters – in fact, I got a poster in the house. But that was when Dad – what that started, when Dad went up to Atlanta – that was sort of our first real touch with real – real politics, at least as far as I was concerned. I went up with him as a page a couple times, which was sort of a nice thing. I think that session was only - you're only in for maybe two months, as I recall. And then

they would come back.

So that was – it was an exciting time. You would go up there, and you know, obviously, we got to meet the Governor and whoever it was – the general pages. And you got to go on the floor and deliver messages and things like that. So I remember – plus you got paid five dollars a day as I recall, which was big money in those days. For me, anyway, in 1963.

But it was – and you got to meet other people, other kids, pages from around the state, too. I didn't go – I think I may have gone once or maybe twice as a page and then only for a few days. But it was –

MARTIN ELZY: Were you surprised when your father ran for that office?

JACK CARTER: No, not particularly. It was – I think '62 was also another – there were other races going on for Governor. And Carl Sanders won a race, and I can remember the guy that he ran against, but I remember us going to a barbecue for that guy. Dad, I think, voted for Sanders. And the saying afterwards was that everybody went to his barbecue but they voted for somebody else. But I remember going to political events. And we were already involved in politics, because I remember staying up late for the Kennedy deal. And my grandmother was also, Grandmother Carter, was also a big Kennedy person.

MARTIN ELZY: Right, right.

JACK CARTER: So we were hoping he would win.

MARTIN ELZY: Your father was in the state senate from '62 to '66. And at that point, of course, you were still living in Plains. Was it a sacrifice to the family for him to be away for the time he was in Atlanta? Or did he come home every weekend?

JACK CARTER: Oh, yeah, he came home every weekend. It's only about two hours and a half to Plains. I remember one night, though, one of the things that you do – and I can't remember now – it must have been – it must have been in the winter. And it must have been during the week. But we were – I was 16 or 17 years old at the time. And we were loading peanuts onto trailers. You bought peanuts during the harvest seasons, and then during the winter, you loaded them out to whoever would buy them, to make peanuts or peanut butter or peanut oil, or whatever they happened to be making – candy. And so we would get orders, and we would have trucks to load. I don't know how – as I said, I never got into the front office, but the back office, which is where I was, shoveling peanuts, was out there loading trucks. And they would show up periodically – and this was late at night, because we had a bunch of 'em to load. And I think R.L. Tyson and I were up on the – oh, you know what it was – we were bringing peanuts in, for some reason. And we were up in Warehouse B, which is a brick sided warehouse with a roof on it, an older one that we had there.

And we were up – the peanuts were so high, that we were having to shovel 'em away – they have a conveyor belt going through the top of the building, and then you shunt 'em off with a 2X4. And as they were falling, the peanuts were so high that we had to rake 'em away from where they were

coming in, just to allow 'em another space for the rest of 'em.

And so R.L. and I were up there shoveling these things, and all of a sudden the side broke out of the warehouse. So both of us sort of rolled down through the peanuts – neither one of us were hurt, but it was just too much pressure for the thing. Dad was up in Atlanta. And so we called him – like I said, it had to be close to midnight, and he drove down either that night or was there certainly by the next morning. And we wound up ultimately having to load all those peanuts up off the ground, back onto the truck. I was in school, so I think I was in school for that part of it. I must have been working after school. And then we had to – it actually fell on the Williams property, which was adjoining ours, and they charged us some inordinate amount of money to put in some braces on the side. But that's a time I can remember that he probably wasn't there when he probably wished he had been home instead.

MARTIN ELZY: Right, right. Well, you mentioned a maid with you when you were on vacation, and also your father away at this time. So the family had employees who worked for the family?

JACK CARTER: I don't think that we had somebody all the time; I mean, it was always different people who would sort of come every once in a while when Mom needed 'em, something like that. I don't remember it as – particularly as we got older – I don't remember that as something that we – we didn't have a maid that – Mary Prince works for us now all the time, works for Mom and Dad. But I don't think that was the case at the time. I don't have any strong memories of any particular maid. As far as the yard went, we boys took care of it, and once you got to be, you know, 12 or 13, you could look out after yourself. Then they basically gave you all the chores they didn't want to do [laughing] – the same as I would do.

MARTIN ELZY: Were you a hunter-fisherman as a youth?

JACK CARTER: Not really, no. I got into fly fishing later on, but at that time, I was not – I went – the one problem that I had was, I sort of enjoyed going bird hunting, but my daddy was a great shot. I mean, we would go hunting, and I would take a box of shells, and if I killed two birds, I had a great day. Dad would take a box of shells, and if he missed one, he had had a lousy day. Because he was that good. And I just assumed that when you got to be older and had done it as long, that everybody was that way. I later found out that he was really an excellent shot.

But I went on – my Uncle Billy and I, and Dad – I was probably, again, 12, 13 years old – they were going to take me on a deer hunt. And it was down outside of Albany. And Billy was sort of real hot to trot, and so we were going to get up at something like one thirty in the morning, which was a great adventure for me. And he thought that the blinds would open at four o'clock, and you would sort of go down in this place, and then set up so that you'd be all set by daylight.

And so we got in the car, and, you know, got up at one-thirty and left at two, and got down there at three, only to find out that they weren't going to let anybody in until six. So I had, I think maybe a 20 gauge with a couple of slugs. And so they – when everybody went in there, they took me out and sat me in one

place and told me not to - you know, to make damn sure I didn't shoot anything unless I was sure it wasn't a person. And then they left me there. And I stayed there for an hour, hour and a half, two hours. And you'd hear an occasional shot, but nothing much going on.

And finally, I'd stayed there as long as any 12-year-old could stay there, and so I was going to head back out and meet 'em at the car. And as I was coming out, I heard this rustling in the bushes, and I thought, "this must be a deer." So I sort of crept around with my gun at the ready, and I looked again and I saw this patch of hide, which obviously wasn't human.

And so I shot it, and it turned out that it was a pig. And I hit it in the flank, and didn't kill it, unfortunately. But hurt it enough so that it just squealed and squealed and squealed, which you could hear for miles around. And everybody knew that somebody had shot a pig. They weren't sure who it was, but I couldn't – but Billy and Dad found out when I came out of there, that it had been me that had shot the pig.

And it was a – it was a humiliating experience and probably turned me off of hunting for the rest of my life.

MARTIN ELZY: Now, how much older than you was Billy Carter? Who was quite a bit younger than his father.

JACK CARTER: Billy was only 10 or 11 years older than me, I think. 11, or something like that.

MARTIN ELZY: We should talk about – you mentioned going to Georgia Tech – about your college experience?

JACK CARTER: I was probably ill-prepared to go to college. I'd always – high school came pretty easily to me, and I didn't much have to study, and I got to college and things were not that way. And I sort of turned to – I had an early life of cards, and got to be pretty good playing cards. But unfortunately, my grades went from probably A- to worse.

And so I – Tech decided I shouldn't come back for one quarter, so I went to Emory for a quarter, and they decided I probably shouldn't come back for a quarter, so I went to Georgia Southwestern for a quarter. And got a – like an A average at Georgia Southwestern. And then went back to Emory. This was '68, would have been, when – I started Tech in '65.

But in the winter of '68, I had sort of decided that me and college weren't on the same path– I had a car wreck. Car rolled over, which didn't hurt me very much, but I used it as an excuse to drop out of school, and then joined the Navy in April of '68.

My dad sort of suggested that I just join up.

MARTIN ELZY: Oh, really?

JACK CARTER: Yeah.

MARTIN ELZY: Oh, well. I wonder what your mother thought of that.

JACK CARTER: I don't know. I never asked her.

MARTIN ELZY: In 1966, your father ran unsuccessfully for governor. You were in college. Did you work in that campaign?

JACK CARTER: Yeah, I was very active in that campaign. The way we would do it was the same way, actually, we would do it in the Presidential race. Atlanta was the headquarters, and they had all the material, and so we would get a couple of boxes of pamphlets and stick 'em in the trunk of a car. And then Mom and Dad would go to the bigger towns in the state, and I, and I guess Chip, Jeff maybe a little bit too, a little, would go to the other towns, just small towns.

And you'd sort of hit town and you'd get out and you'd walk around the town square and give out pamphlets and tell people that you were Jimmy Carter's son, who's running for governor and that you wanted them to vote for him. And then you would try to get the local newspaper or radio station to give you an interview. And then you'd go onto the next one. And you'd sort of do that, and then you'd circle back and come back to Atlanta once a week. So we were pretty active in that particular race.

MARTIN ELZY: That may not have helped your college career if that was during the school year.

JACK CARTER: No, it wasn't, that was just – 'cause he didn't get into that race until very late. That was a race – I think Ernie Vanderbelt – er, Vandiver, was going to run against Ellis Arnall. And Vandiver, at the last minute, dropped out because he had heart troubles. And as soon as he dropped out, there were three or four other people who got in the race. You know, James Gray from Albany -– Lester Maddox had sort of been there all the time, and he sort of was a gadfly at the time. And I don't remember some of the rest of 'em. But Dad decided to get in at the last minute. So I don't think he got in until probably late June. Very close to the filing deadline. And the actual race, in Georgia in those days, the real race was the Democratic primary, because once you got that, you were automatic. But I think the primary was in early September. And so it was about a two-month, very concentrated race, for that period of time. But that was a disappointment.

MARTIN ELZY: Right. Was it a devastating disappointment to everyone in the family, or to your father or your mother particularly?

JACK CARTER: I thought we were going to win. We had, you know, good people – a good corps of people. And we thought we were going to win. And nobody really suspected Maddox. I guess the pollsters probably did. He basically had the same team, in that regard, as he did when he ran for President. In fact, I think - I'm not sure – Hamilton may have come along in 1970. But sure, Jerry Rafshoon, I think, was a pollster in '66, and he had a lot of other good supporters who sort of stayed with him for the rest of his career.

But they probably saw Maddox coming up. But we went to bed on

election night – all you had to do – you were basically running for second place. We figured that Ellis Arnall had maybe 40 percent, but he would never get any more. And whoever came in second, with 20, 25 percent, would probably win, ultimately. And in fact, that's what happened. It's just that we didn't come in second. We were closer then, and then Lester got a lot of votes from down in Southwest Georgia, and it put him over the top, over us. But it was in the wee hours of the morning. And we thought we had it won when we went to bed. It was tough.

MARTIN ELZY: I believe your father has written about sometime after that, that this was a devastating defeat. And that he walked in the woods with Ruth Carter Stapleton, and that that in some way changed his life. Did he indicate that at the time? Or did you see any change in him? You weren't at home at that point.

JACK CARTER: Yeah, pretty much when I left home, I left. And I was not in it too much after that. In '66 he lost; by that time I was sort of in Tech, and I was having my own - you know, started living my life or what I was going to be doing. And then the next year is when I joined the Navy, and I was pretty much out of it in 1970.

[*Sound of opening door*.] Hi, Jason.

In 1970, when he actually started running, I was still in the Navy. I got out late that year, and he had pretty much – as a matter of fact, he had won by the time I got out. This is our son, Jason. [*Break in recording*.]

MARTIN ELZY: So you were in the service, in the Navy, during the Vietnam years. Were you in Vietnam?

JACK CARTER: I was on a salvage ship out of Pearl Harbor, and at one point we went over to Vietnam and spent some time out of Da Nang – salvage ships raised things off the bottom, and we did a couple of missions over there where airplanes would go down at sea, and we'd try to figure out why they went down, and try to raise 'em up so somebody could look at 'em and see what the problem was. And we also pulled barges off of beaches. Sometimes boats that ran close to the coast would run aground, so we'd pull them off.

We were – my one war experience – we were at Cua Viet, which I think, Cua Viet is on the river, I think, that "Apocalypse Now" movie was written about, the riverboats. And they obviously had a base right there at the mouth of it, and they had an ammo dump and a fueling set-up. And the way the fueling set-ups worked there were, you would have a tank on the ground, on the mainland, and you'd run a pipe into the water, and you have a buoy on the other end of the pipe, to float the end of it. And then an oiler would come out, and they would just hook up to the pipe, and they would just pump the riverboat fuel into the tank on the ground.

We were a salvage ship, and salvage ships have four anchors, two in the bow and two in the stern. I started to say front and back, but I want to be clear. And so what you do is, you drop all the four anchors independently of each other,

and then you tighten up on all sides, and it would provide a relatively steady platform at sea.

And then from that platform, that we were about probably 300 yards, maybe half a mile, north of Cua Viet – there were two barges that had washed onto the beach during the storm. And our job was to pull 'em off the beach and re-float 'em before the Viet Cong would mortar them. They used to just try to blow a hole in the bottom of 'em, so they're useless. And so we were attached to one of 'em, late one afternoon, and we had our four anchors down, and a long cable going back to this barge. We had sent people over to hook it up, so that we could pull it off. But we were going to pull it off the following morning.

I'm the petty officer of the deck at that time, and I was an E-4 or 5 – I was 21 or 2 years old – I must have been 22. And I had been there, in Vietnam, for 5 or 6 months. And the guy that was my junior was like 18, and real wet behind the ears, and had just gotten there. And I was being pretty macho and pretty cool, the way you are when you're 22 or 3.

And it was about – it was late in the afternoon, right before dark. And I was on the 8 to 12 watch. It must have been 8:30 or – it was still light outside. And we got a call from an oiler that had been attached to the buoy. It was refueling the base about half a mile from us. And it said that they thought that they had seen a sapper in the water.

A sapper was an enemy swimmer. And what they would do is, they would swim up to the boat – they had no – it wasn't like UDT team – they didn't have any equipment. But they would swim up and put plastic explosives on the side of the boat. And then they would swim off and try to get away from it, whatever.

So anyway, they said that they had thought that they had seen a sapper in the water, and so I told 'em that was good. And I sent my junior guy down to get the executive officer up. So the executive officer comes up, and I report to him what's going on. And he says, "Get the captain up." So I send the kid down to get the captain up. And the captain comes up; he's sort of pulling on his shirt as he comes through the hatch to the bridge. And he's saying, "Sound GQ" – general quarters – "get everybody up, cut the line to the barge, get ready to get up the anchors, get underway, we're going to pull out of here."

So then he turns to me, and he says, "You two go down and throw a couple of these stun grenades out in the water to make sure that sapper, if he's around here, we'll get rid of him. So I'd never seen a hand grenade before, you know, other than in the war movies. I didn't know where any were. But it turns out that unbeknownst to me, somebody put a box of hand grenades right next to this door going out to the bridge. And the captain points to 'em. And they were cylindrical, and I think yellow, as I recall – instead of being the John Wayne sort of bulbous one, with cross-hatching on it. And they weren't put together.

So you had the cylindrical counterpart here, I guess, and then you had the other mechanical parts of it over here. And like I said, I'd never seen one. And I'm still in my, you know, be John Wayne-ish kind of persona. Plus, I've got this kid who's four years younger than me that can't know that I really haven't seen this before.

And so I figured out that you put the detonator down and then you sort of screw it in, and there's still the pin that you pull out with a little handle and everything. So he and I tote this box of hand grenades down to the bow, and I'm thinking to myself, as I'm sort of spooling them together – he's just sitting there doing what I tell him to – and I'm thinking to myself, "Okay, I've seen John Wayne do this with his teeth, but I'm not going to do that. I'll have to pull it out, and then, when I do throw it, make sure that you throw it off of the ship into the water."

So I'm thinking through all these things, but my outward appearance is one who has of course been there before. So I could not get the pin out. So I crouch down in the bow, with this thing between my leg, I'm pulling it as hard as I can – finally the pin pops loose [laughing]. Which sort of takes away a little bit, I think, from the overall image I'm trying to project. But I got a couple of 'em, and I threw 'em off, and they went into the water, and blew up, and whatever. And whatever sapper was around there, didn't bother us. And we got out to sea and were two or three miles out.

And so I went to bed – at twelve o'clock I went to bed. At twelve thirty the oiler has an explosion, and there's a hole ripped in the side of it. So apparently they really did see a sapper. And we were a salvage ship – we were made to sort of put those things back together. So we got the order. It turned out it didn't really hurt it too bad; the hole was about the size of a – the size of a small car, maybe, in a small arms compartment. So it flooded that one, but it didn't get into the gas or anything inside of it. So we had to order pumps and ballast around, so that part of it was out of the water, and they were sort of tilted a little bit. And they sailed back to Da Nang. And my ship followed it, and then we put it back together again in Da Nang, and I think it was the U.S.S. Grapple, ARS 7, and I believe we got a unit citation for that [indiscernible] for the work.

MARTIN ELZY: Well, great. I should have added – I should have added before we did that question, that your son Jason has joined us, the author of Power Lines.

You mentioned that you came back after your father had run successfully for governor, in '70?

JACK CARTER: Yes, he put together that race – I was in the Navy. I got out actually, right around Christmas. I was in a nuclear power program at the time, which was a six-year program, and I had gotten in, in 1968, and pretty much immediately, after I was in, in the first several hours, realized that I had a big mistake [laughing]. But I was sort of stuck with it, and I was sort of, you know, going through the process. And I went to school, an electronics technicians' school, up in Great Lakes, which is north of Chicago. And stayed up there for about a year, going to boot camp and then the various schools. And then when we got transferred out to Hawaii, I put in for all the East Coast ports so I wouldn't go to Vietnam. This was 1969. And nobody listened, and they sent me to WESTPAC and into Hawaii. Which I thought was pretty cool, until, as soon as I got there, they said, "Get ready for the WESTPAC tour." And WESTPAC stands for West Pacific, and what it meant at that time was going to Vietnam.

Anyway, when I got back from that, I had more school to attend in San Francisco, and then later went to Idaho Falls. And Idaho Falls was notorious in the nuclear power program because it had prototypes of reactors, of ship reactors, there. And so that's where you got your practical experience before you went to the fleet.

Side Two of Tape 1

JACK CARTER: And anyway, when I got to Idaho Falls, one of the things that the Navy did in the interest of maintaining the moral purity of its people was, they had a drug bust. And nobody actually caught me, some people had said that I had actually smoked marijuana with them. And when they came to ask me if that were true, I said that it was. Because it was. And also, threw in that I had had a couple of LSD tablets and some THC, just to make sure that if I was going to get – if I was on the borderline, to make sure I got out. And by the time they got all that processed, it was good enough. So they were busting me out of the Navy in a fairly mellow manner, about the time Dad was getting elected Governor of the state of Georgia [laughing]. But everybody just assumed at once that I got out because Dad was in there, and it never got to be a question.

MARTIN ELZY: It was not an issue in the campaign.

JACK CARTER: No, no, no, it was after that. Actually, when they told me I was going to be leaving, they assigned me to Treasure Island, to get out, and said, "Go to Barracks X," or something like that. And so I flew in to where I was supposed to, and got my troop bus over to the Treasure Island, and got there, and I was looking for this barracks X, because I couldn't see it. It was a Saturday afternoon or something like that, and nobody was really around. And I was wandering around with my sea bag, just figured instead of asking somebody I'd sort of get a view of the place and see where it was. And I never could find it. And so I sat down – I was tired, and I sat on this laundry steps. And trying to figure out what I should do next, 'cause nobody was inside. And I was looking across the landscape, I noticed sort of over in a group of buildings, there was this one that had a barbed wire fence around it. And I thought, "Hmm." And so I got my sea bag, and I sort of – I didn't want to go directly to it, so I sort of went around the back –- these buildings were built so that their backs faced each other, and the fronts faced out on different roads.

And so I wandered in between the two buildings that go in the back way, until I could get up to see where – what particular barracks this particular one happened to be. And when I got there, there was a big "X" on the side of it, and I thought, "Uh-oh, this is horrible." In fact, it did not turn out to be that bad. But that's where I got out, and I spent the last month or so in the Navy, at least titularly, in a stockade, although the gate was never locked.

MARTIN ELZY: Well, I hate to ask this, but how did your parents respond to this?

JACK CARTER: Dad was not – he was not appreciative, but he was sort of involved in his own things by that time. He thought that I probably could have done better. He didn't use the "Why not the best?" to –

MARTIN ELZY: What did you do when you came back?

JACK CARTER: Well, when I came back – at that time, I was sort of ready. What, it was in 1970 or so, I was 23 or 4, and I was ready to at least finish school. So I basically got back into Georgia Tech, and picked up junior level physics, after a three-year hiatus. And wound up getting out of there, and then went directly into law school in '75. So I got –

MARTIN ELZY: So you graduated in –

JACK CARTER: Graduated in '72, yeah.

MARTIN ELZY: Graduated from Georgia Tech –

JACK CARTER: In physics.

MARTIN ELZY: And then went to law school –

JACK CARTER: I went directly to the University of Georgia –

MARTIN ELZY: At University of Georgia.

JACK CARTER: And then got out of there in 1975, and at that time, I would do runs up into South Carolina for Dad, campaigning, and just sort of meeting the early money people.

MARTIN ELZY: Well, I wanted to ask you about the campaigns. But I wanted to start with something I found that surprised me, that I had not known. That in 1974, you were a representative for the State of Georgia at a Democratic mid-term convention.

JACK CARTER: I was the interim – the Democratic – it was a mid-term convention.

MARTIN ELZY: Right. Democratic party conference in Kansas City –

JACK CARTER: That's right.

MARTIN ELZY: In December of '74.

JACK CARTER: And that's really where Dad sort of let it be known that he was going to be running for President. That was right about that time.

MARTIN ELZY: And had you run at his urging?

JACK CARTER: No, I ran because I wanted to. Was that '74?

MARTIN ELZY: Yes.

JACK CARTER: It was, it was '74.

MARTIN ELZY: Yes, research showed that in fall of '74 you were elected, and then the event in Kansas City was in December of '74.

JACK CARTER: No, I remember running for it, and getting elected. But it was pretty easy – it was one of those things where you could win if you organized for it and by that time, I knew how to organize. And so you just got a busload of your supporters and you went to a local Democratic party meeting. And you told 'em to vote for you, and they did.

MARTIN ELZY: Before getting to that, I should have asked about while your father was Governor, did you go to the mansion for parties and dinners? You were in school at the time.

JACK CARTER: I lived in the carriage house behind the Governor's Mansion.

MARTIN ELZY: Oh, you did?

JACK CARTER: [Indiscernible] imagine, while I was going to Tech. So I got in there and he got in, in '71. So I basically moved in there. And was at Tech until 1972 -- about another year and a half, I guess. [Indiscernible] then I left and went to Athens. I had married Judy Langford by that time. And so we were living in the carriage house at that time.

MARTIN ELZY: I don't know what it's like for Governor's children. We all see the Secret Service protection for President's children. Were you pretty anonymous as the Governor's child in Athens and at Georgia Tech, or did everyone know, "That's the Governor's son?"

JACK CARTER: I think I was pretty anonymous. I mean, I didn't make a big point out of it. I think I've always avoided that – I think I've always sort of bent over backwards and gone further than I probably had to, to not let the stuff that Dad had done help me in any way [laughing]. I mean, to some degree you can't help it, I mean, because you know a lot of people. But the kind of things that I'd done for a living in any of these situations have been pretty much anti-favor, you know.

When Dad got elected President, I was a lawyer at the time, and I had a situation where I was just an associate in a law firm, and was in Calhoun, and was working at general practice. I didn't know very much at all; been out of law school for six months or whatever. And there was a carpet mill in town, and they would form in a joint venture with some carpet outfit up in Chicago, and I think the mill was going to make the carpeting and then they were going to ship it to Chicago, and they were going to distribute it or however they were going to do it. And the guys in Chicago, who I didn't really know, wanted me to be the incorporator, which is just a signature on a corporate document.

And you know, I didn't mind 'em, and I knew why they wanted to do it, I guess, but it didn't matter. And at the time, I was making – in 1975, I was making $800 a month. Which I thought, at the time, was an awful lot lower than probably what lawyers ought to be, no matter how little experience they had. Plus I thought I had fairly good prospects for the future.

So anyhow, in the course of it all, this guy up in Chicago wanted me to come up and be present - you know, at whatever opening they were going to have for the corporation. And so I flew up to Chicago, and unbeknownst to me, this guy had sort of announced it to everyone – had press releases and everything, that Jimmy Carter's son was going to be the incorporator and part of the business. So when I got off – I knew how it would work, even if this guy didn't. Because I knew what the press was like.

When I got off the airplane, I was greeted by an awful lot of press, and the basic thrust of the question was, "Is this the way you're going to use your father's name? You know, pawning yourself, selling yourself, out to people like this, who are going to use your name for their own benefit. And I figured, $800 a month wasn't worth that crap. So that's when I started, got interested in, the grain elevator.

And with the grain elevator, it was something that was sort of made for me. I mean, I threw away three years of law school, but I loved commodities markets. And when you learn how to hedge – that was just a fascinating feeling about how you made – how you put things together. A lot of people buy things low and sell things high. But what hedges do, and what the commodities markets do, is they let you buy something and sell something at the same time. And then you wind up dealing with whatever that difference is.

Which is, instead of having a paper trail, you have a paper trail less another paper trail, to give you something really ephemeral. And I just loved it to start with, and as soon as I got in the grain business - I mean, I have basically been -- not necessarily in the grain business, but in markets, along those lines, with hedging, and speculating, ever since. And it was just a real love for me. And I paid myself $15,000 a year, so it was almost twice the salary.

MARTIN ELZY: And this was while your father was President?

JACK CARTER: Exactly, yeah. The grain elevator actually started, I think, in like February or March of '78.

MARTIN ELZY: This was – you were in [indiscernible] –

JACK CARTER: Probably '77, I believe it was.

MARTIN ELZY: And this was in Calhoun.

JACK CARTER: Um-hmm.

MARTIN ELZY: Going back to that experience in '74, when you ran and then went to Kansas City, and your father was announcing around then that he was going to run for President – you devoted quite a bit of time, I know, on '75 and '76, to the campaign, did you not?

JACK CARTER: Yes.

MARTIN ELZY: How did that work? Where did you go, what did you do?

JACK CARTER: Well, by 197—- we went down – we had sort of always been sort of, at least, a semi-political family. As I said, from the 1960 election that we watched on TV, which is about the first – not the first one, but certainly the first one I remember staying up really late to see – through the '64 election, which – and I was 15 or 16 at that time – 17, I guess. When my grandmother, for instance, was very big in the Lyndon Johnson campaign. She, I think ran his office in Americus. And it was a pretty rough area, very conservative. But we were sort of always on the left side, and argumentative, as I said – [indiscernible] – the whole family was that way, I think.

And Dad was running – he was in office in '62, so, you know, we sort of were in it. And '66 was a big race for the governor's office. We were moving up into politics. And then when he won in '70 and got in, in '71, all of the Democratic candidates came down to see him in 1972.

At that time, I would go meet 'em. And you know, these are people that you see on TV. I think the biggest difference between the Carter family now, for instance, from any regular family that's not famous or whatever – is that what you find out is that the people who are on TV, you know, the people that you read about in the gossip magazines and all these kinds of things – are really pretty ordinary people. Not that they're not a real specialist in some cases – although sometimes it's purely luck. I mean, I think Bob Dylan is a real poet, you know. But outside of the music part of it, he's a regular person, you know.

And the news announcers that you see are – they may be good people, and some of them are not – but when you see those people, you realize that they are probably – that you probably know fifteen or twenty people that are like them, that would probably do just as good a job in their position. And again, I'm not – they are certainly talented people that are real geniuses. But in terms of morally upright – the kind of person that you'd like to be around – who could do a pretty good job of whatever he's going to be doing, including being a President, the kind of people that run your local bank or that you admire in your own community, would very likely do a pretty good job.

Now, whether they've got the drive to get there, or the time to put in it, is different. But when you meet the famous people, the people that you really respected or whatever, the thing that comes – the first thing that happens is, you think, "Well, these guys are not nearly what I thought they were." And then the second thing you realize is, "Well, people are just – there are just an awful lot of good people everywhere."

Anyway, we got to meet the candidates in 1972. And by and large, they were not particularly impressive. Dad, I thought - you know, without thinking about it at the time, was certainly as good as they were. I did like Hubert Humphrey, who came down, and there's a picture of Amy, who was 3 or 4 years old at the time, smearing brownie all over his face, standing in his lap. And Humphrey, of course, is looking away from her, and talking, which he did all the time.

He talked all of the time, and if you ever asked him a question, you just better sit back, because it would be twenty minutes before you got through it. But on the other hand, Humphrey knew where he stood on everything. And the rest of the candidates that came in were sort of wishy–washy in the first place, they were coming down largely from the Northeast, and they were talking to a Southern governor.

And you could tell that they were a little uncomfortable with the situation. And did not want to alienate him, to the point where they would almost try to see which side he wanted them to come down on, and then they would sort of shape their view. Not so much where they stood in the core, but they would sort of slant.

It was sort of the old thing about welfare – either you want to help these people get back on their feet, or you wanted to make sure that you culled 'em out, to make sure that only the ones who really needed it, got it. You know, still, we're for welfare in either case, it's just how you presented it. And it was pretty transparent.

So after the '72 election, I think Dad and Hamilton and some of these guys decided that Dad matched up well and actually tried to get--and we knew it, the family knew it-- tried to get Dad to be a Vice Presidential nominee, and it was passed over. Which sort of irritated us, particularly with the guy they got.

But anyhow, it wasn't too much further along after that –

MARTIN ELZY: Were you at the Convention in '72?

JACK CARTER: Oh, yeah.

MARTIN ELZY: You were?

JACK CARTER: I was in the one in '68. I was in the Navy, up in Great Lakes. I was in Julian Bond's room on the Sunday night before they nominated him to be Vice President – he was too young at the time. But then I went back to the base on Sunday night, and of course all hell broke loose the following week.

MARTIN ELZY: Right, right.

JACK CARTER: So in '72, we went to the convention. Then when we came back, about a year later – I can't remember exactly when it was – Dad called us into the room -- Mom and Dad were in the Governor's Mansion – upstairs in the TV room, and told us that he was going to run for President.

MARTIN ELZY: When you say, 'we' – the children?

JACK CARTER: Yes. And we thought, "Sure, why not?" Because we'd already compared him to what the Democratic party had, and it was a very easy transition to make. It was not an awesome, 'Oh, my God, you're overreaching' – it was yeah, you know, 'we've seen the rest of 'em; we can do this.' So that was about '73, so we had about a year that we knew what was going on. And I think it was – [indiscernible] – we must have known he was going to run in '74, and was just sort of feeling people out.

But Teddy Kennedy came down – I was in law school – I was about to get out of law school. And Teddy Kennedy came down to give a Law Day speech. And I think that was – when is Law Day? Sometime in May. And I think it was either '74 or '75 – I don't remember exactly what year I was in – and he gave the Law Day speech to the joint groups of people. And then Dad was going to give a speech to the luncheon, which was the Supreme Court Judges, all the high people in the legal system in the state of Georgia – with the law professors and some of the high-ranking law students. And I was invited because I was kin, I think. Hunter Thompson was there and later wrote an article about this.

Kennedy gave a speech, and we thought that he was going to be the competition. We all knew about this and Kennedy had no clue. He came in the night before to the Governor's Mansion, and we were there at the meeting. The big attraction with Kennedy was, we were going to see him that night, but Hunter Thompson was going to come in the next day. And Hunter had made a big splash in '72 with his McGovern coverage for the Rolling Stone. And we were all really hot to meet him. Not so much, Kennedy.

But Kennedy was really bland. I liked his people, but Kennedy was just very bland. I don't know whether he was tired, or what. But he was not impressive. And so the next morning, Hunter Thompson shows up. Hunter, of course, is everything you might think that he would be. He was flamboyant. And when he got to the breakfast, he and Dad sort of stole the show. And everybody else sort of quit talking – it must have been twenty people along this long table. And Kennedy was just like the non-entity, and Hunter and Dad were talking about everything and everybody else at the table sort of had their ear cocked, to hear what they were talking about. It was in a range from politics to music to anything.

So, anyhow, I'm in the student body listening to Kennedy give his speech, and it was really one of these throwaway speeches. It's sort of the 'Massachusetts and Georgia have great ties because, in the old days, when Massachusetts was going to build their sailing ships, they used the good live oak from Georgia.' And I was really sort of surprised, because I thought he was going to be a great orator, and he just – it was just really a bland speech.

So then we went over to this luncheon, and I'm sitting there, and Dad – I did not know this, but Dad had a speech written out, and then tore it up, and sort of wrote one on a handkerchief or something, on a napkin, in a bathroom [laughing]. But he came out, and Dad really isn't an orator. You know, he's not like a Clintonesque kind of person that can just sort of – just belt you out and sort of – but what he can do is, when he speaks with moral intensity, he makes you believe it [laughing]. That what he is talking about is truly important, and should be at the core of who you are. I mean, that's what he does.

And this speech – the core of the speech – there was a case where a poor older black family owned some land off the coast of Georgia. And when the husband died, the sheriff and the county assessor, or somebody, went out to see the widow, and had her sign some papers that they claimed to be just a part of the transfer or will or whatever it was. And in fact, they were quit claim deeds to the assessor, as I recall.

And when she ultimately found out – she was illiterate – and they did this because there was going to be an interstate highway built down through her property. When they found out about it, she got a lawyer. And whatever happened – the lawyer wound up missing a filing date for something. And it went to the Supreme Court, and Bill Gunter, who was the Chief of the Supreme Court, and an old friend of Dad's – and Dad had appointed him – wrote the decision, upholding the lower courts throwing it out, because the guy had missed a filing date.

And so the net result was, that the woman lost the property, and the sheriff and the county assessor got it. And Dad took that, and I mean – talking to, like I said, the guts of the legal system in the state of Georgia. And when he got through, you know, you were just – I get chill bumps thinking about it. I mean, incredible speech. Hunter Thompson heard it, and actually got a tape from somebody. And went back and was raving about it, played it for Mom. And then ultimately, later on – and Hunter was pretty far left, I mean, he was not the kind of person you would expect to be supporting Jimmy Carter. If for no other reason than he was a Southern governor, and people are always unsure about people's background regarding race when that occurs.

But we would get these ex-McGovern supporters who would come in our campaign, saying that they did it because Hunter made 'em listen to this speech on the way from wherever he picked 'em up in Denver, up to his place at Woody Creek. And so they felt like they had to come and support Dad. They would just sort of show up out of the woodwork. And in fact, Hunter later endorsed Dad in the Rolling Stone magazine. It was a backhanded kind of thing.

But that was the speech, and it was just incredible. Well, anyway, the point of all this was, you had sort of a lead-up time about what you were doing.

Meanwhile, Hamilton Jordan was working for the National Democratic Party, showing other people how to set up campaigns – grass roots support and all these other kind of things going through – about how you win a campaign. So he was doing that, and meanwhile going around and helping all these Congressmen and Senate candidates. And Dad would go around and raise money for 'em and all these other kind of things. And he was sort of an up-and-coming Governor from Georgia, liberal, who made the cover of Time magazine.

So we were pretty much into how you run a campaign, and all of us knew what was coming. And so it was a neat time. And by the time you finally got to the campaign, you knew what was going to happen. And for the campaign, we did basically the same thing we had done in the Governor's race in '66. You know, I'd wind up going to all the smaller places. And would sort of pick up a guide, and they would tell me who I was going to meet.

And you would go to the – we started out – in fact, I would go down to Florida – Phil Wise was running Florida. Phil was – well, you know Phil. Phil is the Associate Director of the Carter Center now. But he was – he's like my third cousin. He was about two or three years younger than me in high school, so I didn't really know him very well. But he was the campaign manager in Florida. And that was sort of my particular state. And I would go down there and stay for a month at a time. And basically I'd get in my car, with a trunkload of pamphlets,

and I'd go to these towns in Florida and hand 'em out around the square, and then try and get the radio and newspaper guys to give me an interview, and then I'd go to the next one.

But we needed an organization. I'd talk to Phil every once in a while, and he'd say, "You know, we need a campaign manager over in, you know, whatever county." So I remember one I went to, I think it was Cape Canaveral, whatever the – it was Cape Canaveral at the time – whatever the county is. We needed somebody over there to sort of be the nucleus of the campaign, and so I went to the courthouse and handed out pamphlets. And didn't find anybody.

And then I went outside and was handing out pamphlets to people coming in and out. And finally some guy says, "Yeah, Jimmy Carter, yeah, I've read some stuff about him." I said, "Huh. Can I use your phone?" So we went to this guy's office – he was a lawyer – I called Phil up. You know, talked a little bit, chatted about stuff. And then that guy, because he had done that one little step, he became our campaign manager in that county. So that's the kind of step we would do. And then eventually, you sort of wound up being more on an airplane, and then less on the cars, as we started getting going.

MARTIN ELZY: In those days, the campaigns were more personal, it seems, and more dependent on the workers as opposed to today, when it seems that most of it is just money and television advertising. Is that your feeling?

JACK CARTER: Well, we were coming out of '72, which was a big rules change. And in those days, nobody - I mean, you started campaigning three months ahead of time. And that was what your competition was. And we started campaigning eighteen months ahead of time. And actually had people living - you know, paid people – not paid very much, but people living in the key states that we had. And Hamilton Jordan had come up with a great plan. But it was a – you kind of earned your spurs.

One other thing. This was early in the race – it was December of '75. And at that time, I was - you know, you always wonder why politicians are so mealy-mouthed. You know, when you ask them a question. And at the time, I was not going to be doing that – I was somebody who was going to be upright and forthright, and I was going to say what I thought, and be honest, and tell people.

And I had this trip planned into Columbus, Ohio. And got to Columbus, and the Carter campaign headquarters guy came to meet me. And he was not like your typical campaign coordinator – and I've forgotten the guy's name. But this guy was sort of a hippie – long-haired; he ran the Planned Parenthood for Ohio division. And usually, you'll get some young lawyer or some politically appropriate kind of person. This guy – I didn't have too much trouble with him, but he just - you know, something struck me as not being right.

And instead of having – and again, ordinarily, I would go to a shopping center and hand out stuff, and that kind of stuff, and try to get on the radio. And he took me to eat at a Red Lobster with a bunch of his friends, all of whom I assumed were going to vote for us anyway, and why was I there, instead of out doing something else. And I spent the night at his house, because that's what

people doing a campaign did. And he assured me we would have a news conference the next morning.

Well, as the ancillary family member of a third-rate candidate, going to a news conference meant that you would get the newest cub reporter on the newspaper, who ordinarily did the obits, come and ask you things and then you would get buried on page nine, you know, minimal stuff.

I got to this hotel, and it was packed with people. I mean, all the newspapers were there. Must have been three TV stations – I don't know how many radio stations. You walked up to the front and there was this big sheaf of microphones that you see, and I thought, "Wow." But you know, our campaign had been sort of picking up a little, and I thought maybe this was just, you know, one of the things that had happened.

So I got up – I was – I don't know – this was '76, so I was 29. So I got up, and I said, "Well, I don't really have any statement." And I was thinking, this guy must really be sharp. I said, "I don't really have any statement, but I've been around the campaign an awful lot; I know what's going on; be glad to answer questions you have."

So somebody asked me something about the campaign. I said, Well, for instance, take Florida, which is – they knew our strategy. You do well in Ohio, do well in New Hampshire, and then do well in Florida. And it was important in Florida, because George Wallace was running against us.

And I said, Well, you take Dade County – Dade County, we've got a – where I had just been. It was Miami. We've got a county coordinating group; it ranges all the way from these McGovernites to the John Birch Society – because one of the guys there was in the John Birch Society. And so this one guy in the front row says, "Well, are you guys pursuing the John Birch Society in Florida?"

And I said, "No, I mean, they're not one of our targets groups; we don't expect them to vote for us, really, because we don't really fit in. But, you know, we're not going to turn anybody down; if they want to vote for us, that's good." And they said, "What about the Ku Klux Klan?" And I said - I'm thinking to myself, I'm in the North here, and these guys – and just because you're from the South, they think that you – your racial politics were always questionable. And I said, "No" – basically gave the same answer.

Anyway, I sort of wound up. And I'm there at the end of it, getting cutaways with the TV station, and all this kind of stuff. And I'm thinking, Wow, this is really great. Couple days later, I roll into Atlanta, and go to the headquarters, to sort of pick up the new traveling orders. And nobody will look at me. You know, everybody's sort of turned – they sort of see me coming and turn away, and you think, "What happened?"

So I asked somebody. And the guy that asked me the question about the John Birch Society and the Ku Klux Klan was the lead political writer for the Columbus Dispatch, which is the biggest newspaper in Columbus. And the headline was, "Carter's son denies going after KKK vote in Florida," or something like that. And the entire article was one of those negative kind of things that

says, where I'm trying to cover up our obvious attempt to get the Ku Klux Klan vote in Florida. And I was just sick about it.

And of course, it just did me in there because our opponents would take the clippings of that article and would put 'em on a bunch of other negative kind of things, and they'd hand 'em out in shopping centers and stuff, wherever they thought it would do the most good. And it lasted for a long time. But it taught me that you have to be very wary about the things you say, and what you have to do is, you have to sort of dissect everything and see what it's going to look like if somebody who doesn't like you is going to take it apart and try to make you look bad with it. And that, I think, is the kind of training that all of us received, fortunately at a time, you know, before you got into the real guts of the race, which would have been in the spring of 1976. So that was my lesson on it.

But it was a real intense field of study, in terms of how to deal with people and, in particular, how to control yourself around the press.

MARTIN ELZY: I was going to ask if you were a great speechmaker or if you were involved in fundraising at all, if they have a particular demographic you were supposed to appeal to – like young people or lawyers?

JACK CARTER: Well, I sort of did college campuses, a fair amount. But the problem with college campuses was, college kids just don't vote. But they were good for – you'd go to college campuses because you can get some volunteers out of 'em. And I did raise money early. We thought that it was going to be a lot harder to get the federal matching funds early on in the race than it actually turned out to be. But the earliest thing I did was try to raise the federal matching funds. You had to get $5,000 in each state, nobody could give you more than $250, and you had to get twenty states worth. And so we thought it was going to be kind of tough. We did it actually in every single state fairly quickly, just as a PR thing. Plus, we also needed the money.

But after that, I was mainly – it really got to be sort of the non-media center areas, as opposed to any particular demographics. And I was sort of young and 29ish, like I said, 29 or 30, and so I was a little bit too old for college campuses, but you can sort of fit in. And at the time, you know, you're coming on an airplane, and somebody would say, your local guy would say, "Okay, this is what - we've got you for twelve hours here, this is what we've got. We've got a factory gate you're going to hit here; we're going to talk to a senior citizen's club here; you're going to do the local business club on this occasion. And then you've got two interviews and then when you come back, you go to the next town and do something like that and come back here."

So that was sort of – and you got to the point where, "Okay, [indiscernible], all right, that's good," and then you sort of knew what you wanted to say to each one. The advantage that you had campaigning for somebody was, you didn't have to explain the candidate's stance. You sort of laid 'em out, and if they didn't like 'em, you could just say, "Well, they're not mine, they're his." And so you didn't really have that. And the neat thing was, everybody sort of felt like, that it was – that even though they were in sort of a small place, still, the candidate thought enough to send one of his relatives down there to talk to him, and that you cared enough to go down there and be nice to him.

MARTIN ELZY: All right. Well, should we go to the '76 convention? I presume you were there.

JACK CARTER: Oh, yeah, yeah.

MARTIN ELZY: What was your role? Were you just observing?

JACK CARTER: Oh, I had the great role. I was a son of the candidate who was trying to get in there. They had a – of course, the biggest party was the Rolling Stone party. So – that was on a Sunday night, and so – it was one of the places where you had Paul Newman – they had just one little building – they rented the whole building. Which apparently was under construction or something – but Paul Newman was there; all these people were there. And we had not – much as we thought that we were really sort of worldly - when we got to New York City, we found out that there was still an awful lot of stuff that we didn't really know [laughing]. But I wound up on top of this building with John Belushi and Hunter Thompson at three o'clock in the morning, just getting blasted. And of course you get home at five o'clock in the morning, and you have an interview with some European magazine at eight-thirty.

But the convention itself was – it was a lot of fun. But again, we controlled the whole thing. And so we knew how everything was going to go out of there. But it was – it was a time to sort of – to see the people that you'd met during the campaign. And sort of reap some of the rewards. But it was a – it was just – well, I mean, at the time, you can't help but be a politics junkie, too. So it was just straight mainlining Presidential politics straight into your veins. It was a great – it was a great time.

MARTIN ELZY: You seem to have enjoyed this. You haven't said that you wondered why a father would do this or you haven't mentioned that you had to make personal business sacrifices to participate. You seem to have enjoyed it.

JACK CARTER: Well, I think all that came later [laughing]. Dad's been - you know, Dad has been one track. He's much, much better now than he was then. I mean, he had his own thing to do, and I don't think you get to be President unless you're driven, with the possible exception of the one we've got now, who I thought sort of got it handed to him. But if you're coming from nowhere, you've got to decide that you're going to do it. And you've got to put in the hours and everything else. Dad never demanded that we do anything. In fact, he never even asked us to do anything. We did it because we wanted to, and it was fun and exciting.

MARTIN ELZY: Between the nomination and the election, President Carter, or then candidate Carter's, poll numbers kept going down. It was a close race, it turned out to be. Were you participating as you've already described to us, during the general election?

JACK CARTER: Yeah, the same way. It was much more organized by that time, obviously. Because we were the one running against the other.

MARTIN ELZY: And you were getting much more attention, finally.

JACK CARTER: Yeah, but by that time you had done it. I mean, there was no problem. I don't think I ever made another misstep in front of the press. I mean, I was mealy-mouthed [laughing]. But what you would say is, if they asked you a question you didn't want to answer – you'd [indiscernible] say, "Well, I don't want to answer that." Or you would just – or you would just say no. And if you wanted to – if you wanted them to print something, you would say exactly the way that you wanted, regardless of whether they had asked that question or not. And it's a sad way to do things, but you know, it's sort of you against them, in many respects. And they can't quote you if you don't say it. I mean, that's the rules. Now, they can take it out of context all they want to, but once you learn that trick, then they can't quote you.

And it doesn't make any difference what kind of rapport you get with the press, they'll still – they will misquote you without trying to. I mean, so it doesn't even do any good to really protect yourself that much. Even if you like the guy and they liked you when they're doing the interview, all they can do is change a word to throw the entire context out of it. And so you just - it's stuff you just have to deal with, and the other side has to, too.

But as far as dealing with everybody else, it got to be much more coordinated. I mean, at that time, once – after the convention, I think we all had people that traveled with us, you know, which we never had before.

And you would – I remember one time --

MARTIN ELZY: Did you have a particular person assigned to you?

JACK CARTER: Yes, and I can't remember her name, either. Which is sad. I remember one time in the primaries – you would get a sheaf of airline tickets, and you may have literally – you'd be gone maybe a minimum of a week, a maximum of two weeks. The most we'd ever do is thirteen days, but by the time you've been under scrutiny for thirteen days – and remember, you're spending the night with supporters every single time, so you're always on – the words don't come out right. It's a strange thing. You get so tired, that you know what you want to say, but you can't keep this word from coming up before that word does. I mean, [laughing] it's an odd thing.

But I got to the end, I showed up at the airport, at the time I was supposed to show up, you know, on my schedule. And I flipped to the end of my tickets, and there was not another ticket. So I called up the campaign headquarters, they said, "Oh, well – " and so they wound up calling the airport. I didn't have any money, and they wound up calling the airport and booking me a ticket back to Atlanta, to start over again.

But by the time you got into the real election, it was like clockwork. Everything was scheduled all the way through. You had one – in fact, Abbie Lowell, who's on TV every once in a while now – Abbie was the scheduler for me back at the headquarters. But he scheduled full time. I don't know if he did Chip or not, but I know he did me. And he would just schedule everybody down and make sure it was locked in.

[*End of Tape 1*]

MARTIN ELZY: -- won that election. And was inaugurated. What do you remember about the inauguration?

JACK CARTER: Oh, I carried –

MARTIN ELZY: Or election. Maybe we ought to start with election night.

JACK CARTER: Well, Election Night was just – because we won, it was just – it was one of those phenomenal things. The great thing about running for President is, if you win, you have a long series of victories. During the campaign, the initial primary set, you have one after another of these things every week. And again, for political junkies it's a great way to keep score, and they happen every single week, or every two weeks. And you've got another election, and you've got a chance to see how you've done.

With this last one, you had three or four months to wait, and it was a real build-up, and as you said, we all kept close eyes on the polls, and it was tense. And you got into the debates and they were tense. And you know, you were doing your job, going out, just talking to people all the time. But even then, you were tied into the ongoing politics, because the reporters who kept up with it all the time had you in front of them, and they would ask you a question about something that just happened.

I remember Dad's Playboy interview was one thing. I think somebody caught me while I was on the campaign trail, and asked me about this thing before I'd even heard about it. And so you sort of blow 'em off and say you haven't heard it. But still, those are the kind of things that might pop up any minute. But that election was – that whole race – was - you know, you're on the ground all the time, going from one place to another. Went down to Mississippi a couple times on that one.

But the election night, we were downtown in Atlanta, and as a matter of fact, Dan Ackroyd and John Belushi came by. Belushi remembered me from the time before. They happened to be in town on a Southern tour, and they stopped by the hotel and called up, and I told 'em to come up. So we had a room with a bunch of people in it, adjacent to Mom and Dad's suite. And so those guys came up. And Ackroyd had been playing Dad on "Saturday Night Live" and he was a little embarrassed about the whole thing, although we always thought he was pretty good.

MARTIN ELZY: Did your Dad think it was pretty good?

JACK CARTER: I'm not sure. I don't know if anybody actually asked him [laughing]. But anyhow, we came in late and we won, and then we went downstairs and had the big victory celebration, and it was a real blast. And then right after that, he started collecting his Cabinet. So we went out to Sea Island – no, St. Simon's, I think it was – off the coast of Georgia, and all these guys would come in to be on the Cabinet.

MARTIN ELZY: Did you have a role in that?

JACK CARTER: No, I didn't.

MARTIN ELZY: As an escort or -- ?

JACK CARTER: No. I went out there a couple times and met some people, and that was about it. I wound up – I was starting this grain elevator, because I didn't want to do the lawyer stuff. And so I wound up getting into the grain business, and like I say, it was a great [indiscernible] built the grain elevator up around Calhoun, Georgia. And did that. And it was an interesting business. Just love the business.

And we would go up – Jason actually came along back in '75 – and so he was around. On Inauguration Day we'd sort of walk down Pennsylvania Avenue, which was a great thing. When I got out of the Navy, in 1970, Dad got inaugurated Governor shortly thereafter. And shortly after that, Senator Dick Russell died. And he was the head of the Armed Forces Committee at the time. And I had – the whole time I was in the Navy I saw one Brigadier General in a PX somewhere, because the brass that I was around was pretty low brass, or maybe real brass as opposed to silver and stuff.

But all of a sudden, I go to some sort of – again, the son of the Governor at this particular funeral in 1971, and I'm chatting around and sort of being the center of attention in my little group, and I glanced over, and the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff [laughing] had all of a sudden appeared – I had been out of the Navy for about six weeks or something like that, and here was all the four and five-star Generals in the world, right at this same place, including Admiral Zumwalt, who was the Chief of Naval Operations. So I went to meet 'em, and I was really blown away.

On Inauguration Day as the Presidency, we walked down Pennsylvania Avenue. I carried Jason on my shoulders. And we stopped at this – sort of this round building that was supposed to be solar heated, that we were going to watch the rest of the parade from. It had big plate glass out in the front, and it was really cold, but probably helped a little bit by the heat. And I'm sitting on the third row, watching the parade. And I notice these guys coming down from the back [laughing] – the Joint Chiefs of Staff at this particular time were all sitting in the back row, and they're coming down one at a time and sitting and talking to Dad quietly for five or ten minutes apiece, and then they'll get up and go back to their seats. I thought, "Boy, have we come a long way."

But very rarely went up to the White House --

MARTIN ELZY: I was going to say, you did not live in the White House at any time.

JACK CARTER: Went two or three times a year. Saw Horowitz play up there. Went to Camp David a few times. It was neat to go. Did almost nothing else in Washington. I think the only thing we probably ever did in Washington was to go to the zoo. But the rest of it, you know, we never ended up doing –

restaurants, never did any of those kinds of things. Because obviously, the White House is enough, if that's where it's going to be done.

But stayed out of it pretty much, except on the periphery. This was before the Internet, and you sort of forget how isolated you can be – now that you've got emails, you can bounce to everybody all the time. And did the grain elevator. And in 1980, when Dad of course embargoed the Russians, right before the New Hampshire primary, and at that point, they sent me up to Iowa. Because at that time, I had a profession and I sort of knew about grain and that kind of stuff. So I'd campaign around Iowa, explaining Dad's position and basically talking to farmers, which was a lot of fun. Because I really did know what I was doing by that time.

MARTIN ELZY: Did his embargo hurt your business?

JACK CARTER: He did not tell me about it before he did it, and I had a bunch of grain in my bins. But grain operators pretty much have to be strict hedgers, and so every time I bought grain, I sold grain futures. And so later on, when I would sell the actual grain, I'd buy the futures back. And ostensibly, that's supposed to be exactly right.

But on this particular day – you never know whether you're going to be within a couple thousand bushels, which at a dollar is two thousand dollars. And so when he did that, on a Friday, I think it was, I got up the next morning and went out to the grain elevator, and discovered that I was hedged within some insignificant number of bushels, which was great. But I also knew where all the prices were. I knew where they were at the beginning, before he did it; I knew where they were afterwards. And I also knew where they were when I went to Iowa, and they were all within a few cents of where they were the time before. So I think it was pretty effective.

One funny story. I'm out in Iowa. The White House switchboard is – when you pick up a telephone in the White House, you get the White House switchboard, and you tell them who you want and they'll go find 'em. And it was sort of a way for the family just to be in communication. I'm at some crossroads in Southeast Iowa, with an interstate highway and some major local road, at a Holiday Inn. It's three or three-thirty in the afternoon. There's nobody there except me, a couple Secret Service guys were driving with me, and maybe four or five of the local farmers, political Democratic activists kind of thing. We're the only ones in the Holiday Inn dining room.

The guy that owns the place or the maitre d', whatever he was, came up to me and he says, "Mr. Carter, the White House is on the line." So I turned around and tell him, I said, "Tell them I'll call 'em back." And I turned around to look at these guys, and they're just agape, like, [laughing], "How could you do that?" And I figured it was just somebody checking up, you know, or telling me, "Hey, we're going to change the schedule," or something like that. But I turned around and it was really – I was sort of laughing—I sort of broke out laughing and went ahead and took the call, and it was somebody checking on my schedule or something like that. But it was a unique experience, and a lot of fun.

MARTIN ELZY: So you were as active in the '80 campaign as you had

been?

JACK CARTER: No, I wasn't quite as active. I traveled pretty well, but by that time I had a business I was running.

MARTIN ELZY: By the '80 campaign, too, your father was well known around the country. There was not a question of informing people who he was.

I read, I think, in your mother's book, that you went back to Plains the night of the election, or the day before the election, to greet her when she got home.

JACK CARTER: I don't know.

JASON CARTER: I thought - I've always thought that we were in Washington. Because I remember me and Amy watched some movie. I think the movie was one where the guy fights the big spider with the needle, "The Incredible Shrinking Man."

JACK CARTER: I think we were in Washington for the election – for the election returns. Probably sad.

MARTIN ELZY: Have you participated – I know Jason has – have you participated in the activities of The Carter Center that President and Mrs. Carter have carried on since they left the White House?

JACK CARTER: Elizabeth and I introduce people to The Carter Center. We raise money for 'em. Jason goes on a lot of the trips and has all the glamour stuff, but we just sort of do the ground work. But they have these – they have roughly quarterly Board of Counselors meetings. And we're on the Board of Counselors. And it's primarily a local Atlanta Group. A lot of the big businesses in Atlanta or little businesses are on the Board of Counselors, basically so that local people know what The Carter Center does. Because we're a lot better known outside of the United States than we are inside. And sometimes better known inside the United States than we are in Atlanta, so that's really what this is for. And also to get some advice. A lot of these people have been long-term supporters and know what's going on.

But the meeting is from 7:30 in the morning until 9:00 in the morning, so everybody can kind of come in and get back to their business. Elizabeth and I will, when we run across people who are interested, we'll invite 'em to one of these things. Because they'll come in from outside, and they'll go to the morning meetings, and they can come in, in the evening, and we'll have supper as we did tonight, at Mary Mac's Tea Room, which is a great Southern restaurant here. So we can introduce a lot of our people to black-eyed peas and to hominy grits and collard greens. And then we bring 'em over in the morning, and then they can catch an 11 o'clock flight out and be back where they are, you know, by the afternoon.

So that tends to be the kind of things we do. We're always astonished when we come here, to find out the programs that are going on.

MARTIN ELZY: Right, right. I wanted to ask you about your life since

1981. You moved from Calhoun at some point to Chicago, I know.

JACK CARTER: In 1981, early '81, I sold the grain business. And ADM hired me – by that time I had figured out how to transfer the hedging principals I'd learned in grain into interest rate futures. And I had sent – the year before I had done a program for Gold Kist, who was a big farm co-op down here. And walked through how to lock in your interest rates. At that time, in 1980, prime was in the 20's, and it was moving about 1 percent a week. And nobody – at that time, nobody would fix your rates for any length of time. And on the futures market, I discovered that you could do that. And I sort of came up with this idea pretty much by myself, and really didn't know anybody else who was doing it.

And so I got Gold Kist – they paid me a few thousand dollars as a consultant, and I went down and sort of worked up everything with them, between times working with the grain elevator. So that's really where my interests were running at the time. And I went to – when I got through at Gold Kist, I had this program, which is basically what we call strip hedging, which is commonplace now. But I didn't know anybody who – you know, you sort of want to check your work when you're doing these kinds of things. And Gold Kist didn't know what was going on. And so somebody told me to talk with Salomon Brothers. And so I found somebody up there to send it to, and sent it to 'em, the stuff I had written. And they sort of gave me a condescending sort of pat on the head, saying, "It's pretty simple but you could do that."

But anyhow, in the course of it, somebody invited me to come up to Salomon Brothers and see how they did it. So John Goodfriend was the managing director, and he was a Carter supporter. Jim Wolfenson was also one of the managing partners. Wolfenson is now the head of the World Bank. And he was one of the few relatives of a good friend of mine in New York. And so I went to stay with my friend, and I would go down to Salomon Brothers, right around Labor Day, and got to see what they were doing.

And frankly, they were pretty far behind what I was doing. Which was a surprise to me, because I was running the grain elevator in North Georgia and these are the biggest bond guys, you know, interest rate guys, in the world. And as I was sitting with their Treasury bill trader – again, hedges, buy one and sell the other, and wonder what you get in between – these guys, they were buying the Treasury Bills and they were also buying the Treasury bill futures, but they were two entirely different markets. They should have – they did roughly the same thing, but they were interested in buying low and selling high [indiscernible]. And I wanted to know what happened if you had the Treasury bill and sold a bill future, you know, what do you have left?

So I'm sitting there, and I came up with this idea about – and the basic idea was very simple now, but it was – the banks could lend money to their clients, and float – with their floating rate like they had it. And Salomon Brothers, for a fee, would go to the client and say, "Listen, we'll guarantee your rate if you pay more to the bank than the rate we fix for the year, we'll pay you back. If you pay less to the bank, we get it." And I figured out how to do that. So I asked the kid, he didn't know how, so – he said he couldn't do that. And I was not confident enough to know that he didn't know.

And so I sort of went up the ladder, because Tom Strauss was the guy that ran the gov'y desk – the government bond desk. And I went out to eat with him one night, and I explained it to him, and he said you couldn't do that either. But nobody could tell me why. So I – Jim Wolfenson was giving me a ride back to Maurice's house, and I said, "Jim, I've got this great idea that I think will work, and nobody can tell me why it's bad." He says, "I'll tell you what – I'll fix you up with a guy that we're fixing to make a partner and he does that sort of thing."

So the next morning, I go back to Salomon Brothers, and one of these fancy corporate dining rooms that they've got. It's me and Tom Strauss and Jim Merriwether – John Merriwether? Of the – what's the hedge fund he just took out?

ELIZABETH CARTER: Long Term Capital.

JACK CARTER: Long Term Capital thing. He was also one of the ones that got kicked out of Salomon Brothers years ago for rigging the bond market [laughing] – this was much, much later; he was not a partner at the time. So I would tell Merriwether - you know, Strauss didn't know what was going on. I later found out he was one of the top money-making persons on Wall Street. He must have made ten million dollars a year, and he didn't - couldn't follow what I was saying.

So I would say, "First you do this," and he would say to Merriwether, "Can you do that?" And Merriwether would say, "Yes, you can do that." So I would sort of go through this process. Anyway, I came away from that – they gave me ten years worth of weekly data on the T-bill futures market, and prime. And basically what you did was, you subtracted one from the other and you got the "basis", which again is buy one, sell the other. And you could figure out if this idea would work. And in fact it did. And I ultimately took it back to them – they didn't particularly want to do it, but that got me into the interest rate side. And also made me feel like I was sort of a really special person, because I'd figured it out before Salomon Brothers did.

When I went back – actually when I went back to show it to 'em, I told Jim Wolfenson that I was there, just to let him know I was in town to say hello. And he said, "Listen, you're in the grain business; Michel Friebourg is having lunch with us." Michel Friebourg was the 87 percent owner of Continental Grain, which was the second largest grain company in the world at the time. I had a very small elevator that was 250,000 bushels. And it pleased me that Wolfenson suggested we were both in the same business.

But anyway, I went in for the appetizer for this, and John Goodfriend was in there – he got up, and Henry Kaufman came in. Henry Kaufman was at the time the leading economist for anybody. You know what he said? He was always bearish on the bond market - and had been right for a long time. And everybody just thought he was really, really good. And so Goodfriend got up – we were all eating, and I figured I'd just sit through the appetizer. Goodfriend came in and he got up. Henry Kaufman came in and said everything was going, you know, sour, and incidentally that he thought that the futures market would be the death of the bond market, which I thought was interesting. He got up and left, and Goodfriend came back in, and I'm getting about ready to leave, because it's

really not my party.

And he said, "Mr. Friebourg, you pretty much have seen what Salomon Brothers capabilities are. What can we do for you?" And Mr. Friebourg said, "I want to be able to hedge my interest rates costs through the futures market." And I just – it was all I could do to keep from jumping up and raising my hand in the air. But I wound up staying through the whole thing; dropped a few concise remarks just to let him know that I knew how to do it, even if Salomon Brothers did not. And he invited me over to Continental Grain. And I went over a day later, I think.

And at that time – I never saw him again. But he had a guy there that was fixing interest rates for all the country grain elevators, and he had a spread program. But anyway, you could – these guys could call him up and say, "I want to fix my rate between now and nine months from now." And he would give 'em a rate they could rely on; they would go do whatever they needed to do on it. And he would lay it out in the futures market. And it was a phenomenon exactly what I had been talking about, and here was Continental Grain doing this while Salomon Brothers was still wondering what futures markets were all about. That was 1981. It was a long time.

Anyway, from there ADM hired me because I knew how to do that. And I came up to Tabor Commodities, which was their futures arm. And I ran their bond desk, which was not even in existence when I got there, because the financial futures section of the Board of Trade was over there in what we call the Old South Room, and they were building a new place for it, so it took about nine months or a year before they actually got in. So I learned how to do technical analysis and stuff like that and [indiscernible] the Board of Trade [indiscernible].

MARTIN ELZY: And you went from Chicago to Bermuda? Am I right about that?

JACK CARTER: No, what happened – I was at Tabor for a couple of years, and then Continental Bank hired me to run their bond desk, which I did for another couple of years. And then – by that time I was a good enough trader that I had come to the attention of some of the big floor traders, and they all gave me some money to trade for a while. And then I did that until 1988, when the bond market basically dried up – there was no volatility anymore. And at that point, we parted ways. And I wound up eventually coming with Citibank and hedging currencies.

And then in 1992 - I got a divorce in '88 or 9 or something like that – in 1992, I went over to Cleveland on a client call. A lot of our clients at that time were the old car companies - you know, Ferro and TRW and all those guys. And I went with a guy that worked in my office, Jorge Rodriguez. And the guy that we were supposed to meet with that night was one of our big customers, called at the last minute and cancelled. And so we wound up substituting a customer of ours from Nestle's. And he and his wife showed up.

And Ingrid, the wife, kept telling me I needed to meet this woman, friend of hers that she knew who was the same age as I was, had kids the same age, was from the South, this kind of stuff. And I was – Cleveland, as I later learned, was

360 miles from Chicago. Which I thought was a long time at the time. So I sort of blew her off. So the next morning, I went to call on her husband, and he made me call Elizabeth from his office that morning. And she had a great accent. And I had like six appointments during that day, and then – so basically said - I'm going to wind up eating with TRW tonight; I've got six appointments all day long, got a plane out at 7:30. Why don't I give you a call around 8:00, if we can get together? I'm staying at the Ritz.

And so I called her at 8:00, she came over about 9:00 or 9:30. All of a sudden I looked down; it was one o'clock in the morning. I was, at that time, I thought, totally in control of my life and knew exactly where I was going to go. And about 7:00 the next morning, I was not so sure. And a couple of weeks later, we pretty much decided I was going to go off in a new direction. And so we were married May 15th. It was on Lincoln's Birthday, February the 12th, when we danced in the snow outside the Ritz Carlton, and we got married May the 15th.

And at that point, I stayed with Citibank out of the Chicago office for another year, and then set up – basically got an investment company in Cleveland, to try a foreign exchange operation for a year. Never could really tear anybody away from the banks, and so we shut that down. Elizabeth and I moved out to California for a year, in San Francisco. And then I was still looking for something to do – she was working for Merrill Lynch.

And Invesco was going to move their headquarters from London to Bermuda, and they wanted me to go over and sort of represent them. It was a big tax move for them. They had bought a small money manager over there, and so I was sort of their U.S. representative at that company. So we moved to Bermuda in '95, I think it was. We stayed there for two or three years, and then Invesco decided they were not going to move their headquarters over, so they pulled me back to Atlanta. Well, by that time we had a lot of kids in college and you get some tax breaks in Bermuda. So we went back in ’98 — we were probably not here a year before we went back.

And I was in the currency operation at Bank of Bermuda. I devised programs for different people to get them to work currencies more. And Elizabeth set up – we both sort of set up and ran Carter Global Financial, which is an offshore financial company, investment company. And did well at it. But we sort of, this last year or so – two years ago we bought a condo in Las Vegas. Elizabeth did one of those virtual tours on the Internet and bought it. Because we were sort of looking at where we wanted to live eventually.

And Las Vegas - we've got four kids; we've got one in New York – Jason's going to law school in University of Georgia. We've got one in a doctoral program in San Francisco. We've got another one in the movie business in L.A. So they were in all four corners of the country. We were tired of the humidity. We didn't like living in somebody else's country. And Las Vegas is very interesting. It's got an international flavor to it, we think. There's always people going through there. And the Righteous Brothers play every three or four months. So for all of those reasons, we decided it just would be a good place for us. And then, as we bought the house and eventually sort of moved stuff into it, we decided to keep moving up the time that we would go to move to Vegas. And

all of a sudden, instead of being five or six years down the road, it got to be one. And so we moved out to Las Vegas.

So right now, I'm going to go back into the commodity business, which is fun. Elizabeth is working for Bank of America.

MARTIN ELZY: Oh, good.

JACK CARTER: We're waiting for our first grandchild.

MARTIN ELZY: Oh, wonderful.

ELIZABETH CARTER: No one's cooperating so far.

JACK CARTER: Sarah's the best bet, I think.

MARTIN ELZY: Let me ask you a wrap-up question, because we've about taken the time we agreed to. I was wondering what contact you'd had with Presidents and First Ladies and the family since you formally left the White House, so subsequent families. Are you ever asked for advice for the children of Presidents of the United States? Or what lessons you've learned?

ELIZABETH CARTER: Lynda Johnson had that reunion --

JACK CARTER: Yeah, but we didn't go. Lynda Johnson is trying to organize sort of a group. But I think children of Presidents are sort of – I don't necessarily feel this way, but I think that an awful lot of them sort of get burned one way or the other. It's very easy to use somebody for who they know and that kind of stuff. I've always been so against that, it was really tough - I mean, I never have particularly felt that way. A couple of occasions. But I don't feel scarred by it one way or the other.

But I do think that in many respects, a lot of these guys have had some problems with the press, and they just prefer to keep to their own. So I don't know if we've had any real contact, other than Lynda Johnson, who's been nice to us and called us up. We do like 'em - we've met a few of 'em, maybe at Democratic conventions – we go to one every once in a while. I like to take the kids there, so they can get some nice heritage feelings.

But I don't have any advice to give the Presidential children. I do judge them, though. I judge them very harshly.

MARTIN ELZY: Oh, really? Well, just in closing, is there anything that I have not asked that you expected me to ask? Some question you really wanted to speak about that hasn't come up?

JACK CARTER: No, I think the only thing – and I've already touched on it before, but – well, one thing I have to say, when I campaigned for Dad – and I was pretty cynical - I mean, you know - I was coming out of the Sixties. And you know, we thought we were going to take over the world and knew how to do everything better. And we – I was intellectually superior and looked down on people who were not educated, and all the rest of it. And all of a sudden, I went

out campaigning for Dad in 1975, and one of the things I found out is what I'd already said about the people that you know are pretty much as good as the people that you see on TV.

And that was sort of a surprise to me. I mean, you sort of expect Walter Cronkite to be some really super person. And in fact, he's a nice guy. But you know, I think there are many people who could have done his job. I'm a little touchy as far as music goes, or things like that, where there's a real skill that you get and a talent. But as far as meeting people and things like that, I think there are an awful lot of good people that are better than anybody you see on TV. So that was a big surprise.

But the other big surprise, and probably even equally as big, was how many good, solid people that you find out when you campaign. That was probably the biggest surprise. Because by the time I campaigned, I already knew that about the famous people. But the thing that was the biggest surprise to me was how smart and concerned the average American was – and not only smart, concerned, and unselfish - you know - just wanting to do what was best for the United States.

And for every person I found that was trying to use some influence or something to better himself or whatever you might think was sort of shady, I bet there were fifty people who would get up early in the morning and go out and help you hand out pamphlets somewhere, knowing that they were not going to get anything coming to 'em. Maybe hoping that they would get invited to an inaugural convention but, if not, would have done the same thing the next year.

And that was a real eye-opening thing for me, and it really turned my cynicism totally around.

MARTIN ELZY: Well, that's good.

JACK CARTER: I like the American people.

MARTIN ELZY: But you have not run for office yourself.

JACK CARTER: Actually, I almost did once. In 1980, I was tired of the grain business, and it was 1979, was when it was – the '80 election was coming up. The Congressman in my district was Larry McDonald, and Larry McDonald was a shadow minister in the John Birch Society who, unfortunately, later on was on the Korean flight that got shot down by the Russians, much to my dismay. But anyhow, he was just a nasty kind of a person. I mean, he swapped Laetrile for unregistered guns, he beat his wife - I mean, there are all sorts of really bad things that you could point to. And I thought I might like to run for Congress. And so I set aside one day, and I thought, I'll go down into Marietta, and campaign sort of in his territory – not really campaigning, but just sort of thinking about it.

And so I called up somebody down there – I can't remember how I got the name – I think it was one of Dad's old organizing people - and met her somewhere outside of Marietta, and she put me in a car. And I did exactly the same thing that I'd been doing with Dad, except without the pamphlets

[indiscernible]. And I would go into the square, and I would say, "Listen, I'm Jack Carter, I'm thinking about running for Congress. And just wanted to know what you'd think about it."

And the response was overwhelming. I mean, I was really surprised. It was, "Hold on a second," or, "When you get to the next place, I want you to wait because my wife is coming over, she wants to work for you," and it was – everywhere I went it was that way, and it was an astonishing thing.

And I got – at the end of the day – I must have spent six or eight hours doing that. At the end of the day, the enthusiasm was overwhelming. And I got back to the house that night, and I started thinking to myself, "What if I win?" In the first place, it was a year in advance, and you have to campaign if you're going to do it – you gotta do it right. If you win, you really don't make that much money. You've got 250,000 bosses. You're one of 500 people once you get up there. And you're a junior one at that, and you know, you have to have two houses. And you know, what is this? Why wouldn't I do the things that I know how to do, instead of doing that kind of stuff?

And so I called a press conference. I decided I wasn't going to do it. So I called a press conference. And helicopters, you know, came in - TV, all these kind of guys came out, because they thought I was going to announce that I was going to run for Congress. And they all came out to the grain elevator, landed out in the yard – I thought it was pretty cool.

And so I had the press conference and basically I said, "I'm not going to run for Congress, and these are why, because, you know, what do you get if you win?" And I went off on a vacation, down to the Caribbean or someplace. Came back a week later, picked up the newspaper from the day after I left. And looked for the article that said I wasn't going to run. And the headline was, "Jack Carter does not tell all the truth."

And what they had done was, they had gone to ask whoever the Democratic party guy was that was over in Rome, who I knew, and whose name I can't remember, thank goodness. And he basically said, "No, I don't think he's got a chance, and he doesn't want to run against Larry McDonald, because he thinks Larry McDonald will beat him." And so – which is fair to say in the article. But the guy that wrote the headlines, of course, didn't write the article. And Bill Shipp, who is an old Carter friend, was an editor. And boy, I was hot. But, you know, there's nothing you can do, once you're a public figure or something like that. Jack Carter does not – I couldn't believe it. So anyway, that's my last experience really with [indiscernible] run for politics.

MARTIN ELZY: Are you real active supporting other candidates since then?

JACK CARTER: Not particularly. I'd like to - I've got sort of a theory – I like to figure out what I would do in this kind of situation. And I think right now, the Democratic party – you almost – and it's – and I don't know exactly how I feel this – Dad is sort of a great elder statesman. And he says what needs to be said, in many respects. I mean, I think I don't ever disagree with stuff that he says, and he's very outspoken. But he doesn't – (he's so far from being a threat that

nobody particularly listens) - he doesn't get the kind of press that, you know, George W. Bush would get, for instance. The Democratic party candidates are caught up right now in trying to build the specific strata of groups that they need to get the nomination. And so they wind up very much catering to the special interest groups that have always been traditional Democratic allies.

But the problem when you do that is, you start - you're talking often about issues that don't really apply to mid-type America. And obviously, you've got to get the nomination before you can go on to win, but there's nobody talking to that middle America group that stands for the Democrats of the side that I think makes the most sense. Because you wind up talking about labor union issues or feminist issues or, you know, all the kind of things that we need – racial issues and those kinds of things.

So somehow, what you need is, you need somebody or some way to express the point – not the point, but you need somebody sort of coherent that can explain that particular view and say, for instance, about the war in Iraq, that it was a very dangerous or risky experience and you've got to expect something to go wrong with it at some point.

And the fact that the system over there has collapsed, or that the administrative [indiscernible] wouldn't back you, was one of the things that could have gone wrong, and this one happened to do it. But there were a thousand of those that did that. And so that's the situation that you get. And so somebody has to be up there and say that, who is not really concerned that he is running for President or winning, but just that they get to be heard.

And I don't know how you do that. I don't know how somebody gains that voice. But that's the part that I like. You know, how do you focus – how do you come up with a response that gives that view a voice, without having to be bound by the local politics of having to get the Democratic nomination. I don't know how you get there. Jason probably knows.

MARTIN ELZY: Jason?

JASON CARTER: A radio show. That's how the super conservatives buy this time. Because they get the message out all the time, and they hammer it, and it’s not from public officials. It's from Sean Hannity.

MARTIN ELZY: Well, I have kept you away from your family a great deal this evening, and I apologize for that, but --

JACK CARTER: Jason hasn't heard some of my stories.

MARTIN ELZY: We're very grateful that you came in and agreed to do this interview.

JACK CARTER: Had a good time.

[*End of Tape 2*]