

Interview with
LLOYD JUSTICE, JR.

May 29, 2019

RANDALL J. BUNN
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INDEX

Aerospace Medical Division	10, 15
Agent Orange	12, 13
amputated	12, 20, 21, 22
ballistic missiles	7
Bible College	16, 17
Brooks	10, 13, 14, 15
Caliente [Nevada]	20, 21, 23
Capitol Hill High School	6
Cherokee	5
Chief Master Sergeant	15
Eglin [Air Force Base]	10, 11, 14
G.I. Bill	16
Johnstown [Pennsylvania]	4, 5
Justice, Lloyd [father]	5
Korea	8, 11, 12
Korean War	7, 12
Lackland [Air Force Base]	8, 13
medical discharge	15
missile specialist	7, 10
Native American	5
Nevada	17, 20, 23
Oklahoma	5, 6
Pork Chop Hill	7, 8, 11, 12
POW [prisoner of war]	8, 12, 13
Ray, Evelyn Elizabeth [mother]	5
San Antonio [Texas]	8, 10, 13, 17
Seminole	5
Southern Utah Veterans Home	4, 20
St. George [Washington County, Utah]	2, 20, 21

LLOYD JUSTICE, JR.

Lloyd Maurice Justice, Jr. was interviewed on May 29, 2019 by Randall J. Bunn at the Southern Utah Veterans Home in Ivins, Washington County, Utah. He related his military experiences.

RB: I want to ask you a little bit about your military experience, but before we do, I want to get a little bit about your background. You told me a few things before we got started, but so tell me when you were born?

LJ: I was born in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

RB: And what date?

LJ: What day I was born? Ten, thirty-one, thirty-five [October 31, 1935].

RB: So, on Halloween!

LJ: Yes.

RB: You were a Halloween baby.

LJ: Oh, don't go there. I was a spook baby.

RB: Okay. [Laughter]

LJ: I weighed thirteen pounds. My momma didn't know what to do. She was only five foot tall. My dad was like six four.

RB: Oh, man!

LJ: And he weighed 119 pounds when he went into the military.

RB: Wow! Well, so —.

LJ: He was a —.

RB: That's great! So tell me about your mother. You said she was full-blooded Native American?

LJ: Native American.

RB: What tribe?

LJ: Seminole and Cherokee.

RB: Seminole and Cherokee. Because your [maternal] grandparents, one was full-blooded —.

LJ: My grandfather was Seminole, my mama [grandmother] was Cherokee.

RB: And, so your mother's name was Evelyn Elizabeth Ray?

LJ: Right.

RB: Is that right? And your father's name is like yours [Lloyd Justice].

LJ: Yes, the same.

RB: Did you have brothers and sisters growing up?

LJ: Nope.

RB: No. So you were an only child. But you grew up pretty much all around or at Johnstown, Pennsylvania?

LJ: Well, I grew up everywhere, really.

RB: Really? So, what did you —.

LJ: When I grew up, I grew up everywhere.

RB: What did your dad do for a living?

LJ: My dad was in the book selling business, what do they call them?

RB: Encyclopedia, or something?

LJ: He was in the encyclopedia as well. My dad discovered that snake has legs.

RB: Oh. Where is that?

LJ: We was in Oklahoma and we was provin' how snakes had legs.

RB: Oh, gosh.

LJ: So we bought about 300 to 500 snakes and behind the tail about this far [gesturing with hands] is like two things that comes out when you burn them. And they have two legs and on each leg they have three fingers. They walk upright.

RB: Yes.

LJ: The [*Holy*] Bible says in Genesis, "Satan was cursed as a snake, became a snake, and he was cursed and from the dust of the ground thou shalt go and from the dust of the ground thou shalt eat."

RB: Okay.

LJ: This was actually in the *Bible*.

RB: Alright.

LJ: And my dad never did, was trying to figure out if they had legs and we discovered the legs by burning from anywhere from 300 to 500 snakes.

RB: Alright.

LJ: And he could see the legs come out after about so far [gesturing with hands] from the tail.

RB: Wow! Okay, so if you were moving around, you told me you graduated from high school in Oklahoma City [Oklahoma]? Is that right? Capitol Hill High School? Tell me about high school. What was that like for you?

LJ: Oh, well, there was a situation that happened. I ran a 100 yard dash in 9.2.

RB: No, way! That's amazing!

LJ: I did.

RB: You were fast!

LJ: My dad was standing there beside the coach. And the coach delayed two, I think it was like two, what did I say, 9.2?

RB: 9.2 seconds.

LJ: He delayed it two seconds.

RB: So 11.2 seconds?

LJ: They said it was 11.2, but my dad stood there and watched him and it was 9.2 and he said, "Dang, you are fast!" But I will say this, I had a neighbor that was faster than me.

RB: Wow!

LJ: He would shoot a deer and run that deer down and killed that deer.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: And his boy was right beside him. He was around forty-five years old.

RB: Wow! [Laughter]

LJ: And he ran through the woods like he would go through the Olympics!

RB: Alright. Let me ask you this, so you told me that you went into the [United States] Air Force in 1953.

LJ: Yes.

RB: Tell me about that. Were you still in high school when you were drafted?

LJ: Went right out of high school, right into the thing, and I went in when I was seventeen instead of eighteen.

RB: Now, the Korean War [Conflict] was going on then, right?

LJ: That's correct.

RB: Did you have to do anything with that?

LJ: I sure did. I was at Pork Chop Hill.

RB: Oh, really?

LJ: I was the last of the Air Force that I know of —

RB: Right.

LJ: that's still alive.

RB: So when you went into the Air Force, what was your career?

LJ: I was a ballistic missile specialist.

RB: Okay.

LJ: What they call— I had to design ballistic missiles and everything.

RB: Say that again.

LJ: I had to design the ballistic missiles.

RB: Oh okay, great.

LJ: And that's whatever is recorded, so they could track it where it was going to go, right, and do all of that.

RB: Okay.

LJ: Plus, I also, when they was in battle, I had to make sure all the equipment, the rifles, the guns, and all the equipment they was charging up the hill was in operation.

RB: Right. Okay.

LJ: But I was in the Air Force and I was chosen to do that because of my specialty.

RB: I see, right.

LJ: The [United States] Army chose me, so I was there to help them out at Pork Chop Hill.

RB: Okay.

LJ: And in the processes of conquering the hill, I had a piece of grenade that went in my leg and wiped out my leg.

RB: Oh, okay.

LJ: You can see the scars of where the grenade went in and when I fell and everything, I actually saved some other people's life, because there were about six of us all together and in the process they picked me up, picked all the others up. There was six of us all together, so five of them.

RB: Right.

LJ: Then we was put, captured, as a POW [Prisoner of War].

RB: And that was, so, that was in Korea?

LJ: In Korea. And I spent six months as a POW, somewhere around six months.

RB: Okay. So back up a little bit. So you got enlisted, or drafted, where did you do your basic training?

LJ: Lackland [Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas].

RB: Okay, you went down to San Antonio.

LJ: Yeah.

RB: What do you remember about basic training? Anything? Was it hard? Easy? What?

LJ: Basic training was, how can I say, it's hard to explain.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: I was a, basic training to me is, I took no guff off nobody.

RB: Really!

LJ: Because I was a spiritual person.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: My dad was a pastor. And his dad was a pastor. And I walked up to the sergeant and said, "Listen, don't get in my face and cuss me."

RB: Yeah.

LJ: I said, "Now if you do that, I will deck you." And I said, "I'll listen. You can cuss anybody else and get in front of their face."

RB: [Laughter]

LJ: And I said, "When you say that right, left, or whatever, I will follow your instructions." But, I said, "Don't get in my face."

RB: And what did he say?

LJ: And he said, "I'm gonna tell you what to do whether you like it or not."

RB: [Laughter]

LJ: I said, "There is one thing you won't do, and that's my religious faith."

RB: Right.

LJ: "I'm doing that because of my convictions, 'cause I'm human."

RB: Right.

LJ: "And I will go off."

RB: Right.

LJ: I'm not a perfect person.

RB: Did you ever have to get upset about that with him?

LJ: Well, one time I decked a captain or whatever. And they were going to insubordinate me. I said, "I double-dog-dare you; try it."

RB: Yeah.

LJ: I said there was about six witnesses.

RB: Yeah. Oh, man.

LJ: So, when they wrote me up and everything, and all this, you know.

RB: Okay.

LJ: But that was when I went back to Brooks [Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas] when that happened. I had actually —.

RB: You said you went to Brooks.

LJ: I went to Brooks in '61—

RB: Oh, I see, I see.

LJ: '61 to '70.

RB: So back in '53, when you went to basic training with the Air Force, when you finished basic training, you went to a tech school?

LJ: Eglin Air Force Base.

RB: You went to Eglin Air Force Base —

LJ: In Jacksonville, Florida.

RB: And what was your career field or technical training in?

LJ: It was a missile specialist.

RB: So, it was a missile specialist.

LJ: A missile specialist.

RB: Okay.

LJ: Well, see and I was in top security, though, 'cause I went from there back to Brooks Air Force Base; it's the headquarters of Aerospace Medical Division.

RB: Oh, okay.

LJ: And they did the centrifuge of the astronauts going into space and doing all that.

RB: Okay.

LJ: So I had a lot of top security codes. I had to remember 6,500 top security codes that was vital to information that I couldn't give out or anything.

RB: So after you finished your tech school at Eglin, what was your first assignment? Did you go off to Korea at that point?

LJ: Well, when I first went to Eglin, I went from there to Korea.

RB: Yeah, right.

LJ: After basic training, I went almost directly to Korea.

RB: So, "From April to July 1953," I'm reading, that is when the Battle of Pork Chop Hill?

LJ: Pork Chop Hill is in July.

RB: So you were there in July?

LJ: I was there in July, the latter part of July.

RB: So, tell me about the battle in July when you were there. What do you remember about that?

LJ: Things I don't want to remember.

RB: Well, I bet, yeah. Okay.

LJ: If I told you some things that they did, when I was captured, things that happened, things that I saw—

RB: So were you taken to North Korea?

LJ: Yeah.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: I was in Osan, Yusan, Seoul. Pork Chop Hill is close to Seoul.

RB: Okay, yeah.

LJ: Okay. Now, when you go up, here is what a lot of people don't know. The mountain where Pork Chop Hill is at, is on a mountain, it's on the side of the mountain.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: And when you get to the top of it, you have not reached the top of the mountain.

RB: Really? Yeah.

LJ: You have to go farther in on the hill before you hit the mountain and go up the mountain.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: So when people tell about some things of the Korean War, they don't want to tell you a lot of things about the Korean War, because they drug people and never told us about it.

RB: Right.

LJ: They didn't even know about it.

RB: So, Pork Chop Hill is not too far from the Demilitarized Zone. Is that right?

LJ: Somewhere around there, yeah.

RB: And so you are pretty close to North Korea. So you were there and you were captured by the North Koreans and you were in a POW Camp?

LJ: And they did have chemicals.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: And I was exposed to the chemicals.

RB: Ahhh.

LJ: And I did have, create, Agent Orange because see this leg? [Gesturing to his right leg]

RB: Yeah.

LJ: I had Agent Orange in my toes, I mean, my foot that broke. The bones were so brittle, it ate it, the marrow was ate out of the bone.

RB: Okay.

LJ: When they went to operate on the foot, I didn't even know it was broke.

RB: Right.

LJ: It was three or four months that it was broke. They had to take the foot because it rotted.

RB: Who did that? When did you have, I know, but when or where were you, was your leg amputated?

LJ: Here.

RB: So back here in the States. So all these years —.

LJ: Back here in Utah.

RB: In Utah. So you got released eventually, after the war reached a, I don't know, it was never really settled, but at least a cease fire. And you went back to the States?

LJ: I went back to Brooks Air Force Base from '61 to '70.

RB: Okay. So, where were you from '53 or '54 to 1960?

LJ: Actually, they also sent me, when I come back from the POW, fact the matter, they thought I was AWOL [absence without leave]. When I came back from being captured and everything, I got the operation. They almost had to amputate my leg twice.

RB: Ah, okay.

LJ: When they did the operation, infection set in when I had a cast.

RB: Was that Wilford Hall [Lackland Air Force Base]?

LJ: It was so completely— and it caused another infection. So, twice they was going to take my leg.

RB: Was that at San Antonio?

LJ: No.

RB: Did you go back?

LJ: I had the operation at Lackland.

RB: At Lackland, yeah.

LJ: At Wilford Hall, the medical center at Lackland.

RB: Yeah. Right.

LJ: And I had eight specialists and everything, but they didn't know nothing about replacing a knee.

RB: Right.

LJ: And they put two staples in my leg. But because of all the situation with Agent Orange, I lost my leg.

RB: So when did you finally lose your leg?

LJ: About four months ago.

RB: Oh, so you have lived all your whole life until just recently?

LJ: Four months ago.

RB: Okay.

LJ: They told me either my foot or my leg, my whatever.

RB: Yeah. So —.

LJ: They told me they were going to amputate only up to my knee and not all the way up to here.

RB: Yeah. So, um, you were at Brooks in '61, you said?

LJ: Yeah, I went back to Brooks from Eglin.

RB: What were you doing at Brooks?

LJ: I was actually working with the centrifuge and stuff where they train monkeys to go into outer space.

RB: Ah, okay. Really?

LJ: I was trained to— I was working with the monkeys and then I also had to install plumbing, like for chemicals and stuff they used for in the laboratory.

RB: I see. Yeah.

LJ: So I have a technical training —

RB: Yeah, that's interesting.

LJ: in that as well. So, there was a variety of things that I did, And also when they needed some plumbing work done; I had to take a plumbing course.

RB: Oh yeah? [Laughter] That's good!

LJ: So I ended up fixing houses and faucets. That was just a minor part, you know.

RB: Right.

LJ: And I was trying to recuperate because of my leg. I was medically discharged.

RB: When did you get medically discharged?

LJ: February 5, 1970.

RB: Okay. So between 1960 and 1970, you were at Brooks? Were you there the whole time? Or what?

LJ: Yes.

RB: Wow! Okay.

LJ: And actually my rank went up to a E-9.

RB: E-9.

LJ: As far as I could go.

RB: Chief Master Sergeant?

LJ: Chief Master Sergeant, Base Commander. I was getting promoted, but they needed me at Aerospace Medical Division in a top secret agency. They needed some information. Meanwhile, I was in between there and Brooks, I saw something that happened. A person got killed. So I went on what they call protection, what do they call them?

RB: Witness protection?

LJ: Witness protection.

RB: Oh, goodness, yeah.

LJ: In fact of the matter, I still am being shot at.

RB: Wow!

LJ: Since I have even been out. I never said nothing to anybody about it or anything to my wife, [she] also experienced [it]. She saw a bullet fly by me and just barely missed her.

RB: Wow!

LJ: So that is when I lived in a big area.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: They know where I'm at. I don't know how they figured it out, or what they did, but they know.

RB: Alright.

LJ: I don't want to get into that part.

RB: Okay. So you got a medical discharge in 1970 and what was it based on? Your disability?

LJ: 'Cause I wasn't able to physically finish out because of my leg injury.

RB: Okay, yeah.

LJ: It got to where I couldn't march and do all the strenuous stuff that they do.

RB: Oh, okay. Sure.

LJ: 'Cause you have to be fit.

RB: Oh, yeah, yeah. That is what they expect you to do. So with this injury, finally, after seventeen years, you couldn't do it anymore.

LJ: But the worst part of all this, is that they royally screwed up this DD Form [214] so bad that when I got out, my rank was Airman Basic with no stripes.

RB: That doesn't make sense.

LJ: On this DD Form [214].

RB: Right, right.

LJ: But it is so crazy. A fact of the matter, if you sit down and figure it out.
I know John Hagey in '61, I've met John Hagey.

RB: Yes.

LJ: Okay. The same guy that had a center downtown was also in my Bible College. Okay? He had a military service thing down there. And he was one of my teachers.

RB: Right, right. Okay.

LJ: John Hagey was in my Bible College teaching me pastoral counseling.

RB: I see.

LJ: So he was there where I graduated from.

RB: When did you go to Bible College?

LJ: '70 to '74.

RB: So, right after you got out of the Air Force, you were doing that.

LJ: I went on the G.I. Bill. [G.I. Bill of Rights – government issued bill for veteran's education – after World War II.]

RB: I was going to say, you used the G.I. Bill and went to Bible College.

LJ: Yes.

RB: Very good. So, were you able to use your training from Bible College after that? Did you work in the ministry at all? Or anything?

LJ: I have been in the ministry for sixty-five years.

RB: Yeah. So what did you do?

LJ: I had a church in Las Vegas [Nevada].

RB: Let's go back. So after you graduated from the Bible College, let me see, you said it was International Bible College in San Antonio. Where did you go? What did you do after that?

LJ: After Bible College?

RB: After you finished the Bible College.

LJ: I was pastoring churches all over.

RB: Just all over? So where did you go? Do you remember?

LJ: Pastoring churches in Wichita [Kansas].

RB: Okay.

LJ: I was pastoring a church in so many places I can't remember.

RB: And so when did you get married the first time? Do you recall?

LJ: The first time I got married in, uh, '89.

RB: In '89?

LJ: No, no, no. That was my third.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: The first time I got married, that I don't remember.

RB: Were you in the Air Force?

LJ: I know I was in the Air Force.

RB: So you were married, your first wife, okay.

LJ: I know I was on active duty.

RB: Yeah, okay. Then the second time you got married, were you also on active duty?

LJ: Yes.

RB: Okay. So were you married when you were pastoring churches?

LJ: Yes.

RB: So your wife went with you and your kids.

LJ: Yes, she was there.

RB: Obviously, so the two of you were a team and you worked different churches. Okay.

LJ: Yes, we were a team. See, my dad, my grandad, all the way back, were all ministers.

RB: Yeah, okay. So you come from a long line of ministers.

LJ: And my dad's five brothers were preachers.

RB: Oh, yeah?

LJ: And they married into my momma's sisters. There were five sisters. They all came together [gesturing with his hands, all five fingers of each hand touching each other] and they all got married to each other.

RB: Oh, is that right?

LJ: Fact the matter is, I look not like my dad but my dad's brother. But I will leave that alone.

RB: Oh, do you? [Laughter]

LJ: Yes.

RB: Oh, okay. [Laughter]

LJ: I'll leave that alone.

RB: Okay. [Laughter] Alright.

LJ: [Laughter] I got to share something with you, seriously.

RB: Okay.

LJ: This happened with me when I was seven.

RB: What's that?

LJ: I was in New Jersey.

RB: Okay.

LJ: A destroyer came over.

RB: The what?

LJ: The destroyer in World War II. I told my dad, "I want to get on that destroyer." He says, "Son, don't be stupid and silly. Nobody gets on a destroyer. Not even a kid."

RB: Right.

LJ: I got on that thing.

RB: How'd you get on?

LJ: I just walked right on.

RB: Wow!

LJ: Walked right up the ramp. Got on there. Got up there. And I was a big dude.

RB: [Laughter]

LJ: I was out in the ocean for two weeks in the middle of World War II, at the age of seven.

RB: Oh, my gosh!

LJ: And I have nightmares over that ever since.

RB: Oh, my gosh!

LJ: It's just like it was daylight and all of a sudden everything was pitch black and you could see fire and everything. Guns going off and everything on a destroyer.

RB: Right.

LJ: And they thought I was an optical illusion when they saw me. They were like, "I think we got a live kid on board."

RB: [Laughter]

LJ: And they were going around [saying], "What do we do with him?" And I was actually separated for about forty-five years —

RB: Wow!

LJ: from my natural family.

RB: Wow!

LJ: So we finally got together when I was about thirty-five.

RB: I see. Wow!

LJ: I found out what had happened and everything.

RB: Right.

LJ: So I was adopted. I was here, and I was there, and I was God knows where.

RB: Wow!

LJ: As a kid, so my life was —.

RB: Kind of confusing. [Laughter]

LJ: Confusing, that's an understatement.

RB: Yeah, I can see that.

LJ: But I did something that nobody told me to do and I just did it. So ever since then my life has been, like oh, what's gonna happen next?

RB: Right. Well, have you had a good life?

LJ: Actually, I couldn't ask for a better life.

RB: Really? Okay.

LJ: This leg coming off, I think God showed me a lesson on that thing, too.

RB: So, tell me about, you said four months ago you had your leg amputated.

LJ: Yes.

RB: And where was that? Here in St. George?

LJ: Yes.

RB: How did you end up in St. George?

LJ: I lived in what they call Caliente [Nevada].

RB: Caliente.

LJ: One hundred-fifteen miles north of Las Vegas.

RB: Okay.

LJ: My wife somehow found out, actually, when this was being built, I lived in Washington City [Washington County, Utah].

RB: Oh, you did?

LJ: Before it [the Southern Utah Veterans Home] was built.

RB: Where does your wife live now?

LJ: She's in Caliente.

RB: Oh, she's in Caliente. Okay.

LJ: She drives all the way from there to here, which is 120 miles one way.

RB: I see. Okay.

LJ: Two hundred-forty miles, just to come to see me.

RB: Right.

LJ: When I get out of here, I'm going there.

RB: Yeah. So, you were in St. George and you had your leg amputated here.

LJ: Well, actually, when I came here, I was on the ninth floor and I almost died.

RB: You were on the ninth floor?

LJ: I was on the ninth floor and I was critical.

RB: Where?

LJ: I fell out of the bed, probably about twelve to fifteen times.

RB: In St. George?

LJ: No, up on the ninth floor.

RB: Ninth floor, where?

LJ: Here.

RB: In this facility?

LJ: In this facility.

RB: Oh, okay. So, you came here for rehabilitation after your leg was amputated?

LJ: No, no, no, before.

RB: Oh, before you had it —.

LJ: I came here in November of last year [2018].

RB: And because you were a disabled veteran you qualified to come and stay here.

LJ: And stay here.

RB: And your wife couldn't take care of you?

LJ: I really didn't have the percentage and everything, until they settled with the VA [Veteran's Administration].

RB: Right.

LJ: So, I don't even have that settled.

RB: Right.

LJ: Thirty days after this [leg] was amputated, I am supposed to get my money. It's four months and I haven't even got my money. And I have not got this settled.

RB: Ahh.

LJ: So that I can be on total disability, more than, more than 100 percent.

RB: What was your disability after you got out of the Air Force in 1970?

LJ: Service-connected right knee.

RB: So, it was a certain percentage, right?

LJ: Well, when I was in, it was sixty.

RB: Okay.

LJ: They told me that if I went to VA I would get more, but instead it went from sixty to thirty.

RB: Oh.

LJ: Then it took me about thirty years to get forty.

RB: I see.

LJ: Back up to forty, and then it went from there to other complications came, evolved from my knee and injury. This one here —

RB: Right.

LJ: began to give out and I started falling and had a concussion. I fell down steps. I had two concussions.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: And I probably died and they revived me maybe, [emotional] they revived me in Caliente, probably seven times when I lived there. I lived there about five years in Caliente, before my wife got me here.

RB: Okay.

LJ: My wife got information and got me here and this is where I am recuperating.

RB: Ahh, okay. Now how did you end up in Caliente? That is kind of the middle of nowhere.

LJ: Well, I was going to move to Pioche [Nevada], but it was too cold.

RB: I see.

LJ: So I moved down farther south to Caliente. Caliente is fifteen degrees cooler than [Las] Vegas.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: About fifteen degrees cooler than here in the summer.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: And I thought moving to Washington City would be cooler, but it wasn't. It was hotter. It was actually hotter.

RB: Hot! [Laughter] Okay. So, you are here, but you are only here for a while?

LJ: Yeah.

RB: Then you are going to go back home?

LJ: Then going back home, yeah.

RB: Okay, good.

LJ: They are making arrangements, building a ramp and everything, 'cause we have to have a ramp to my home where I live in Caliente.

RB: Ahh, okay. Let's see.

LJ: I like Caliente because it is a small town.

RB: Yeah, that's true.

LJ: They have everything I need.

RB: Good.

LJ: They've got a car wash you put two quarters in and wash your car off.

RB: Yeah, right, right.

LJ: Two quarters.

RB: That's good. [Laughter]

LJ: You can wash the whole car for a dollar.

RB: Yeah, okay. [Laughter]

LJ: They still have the old washer.

RB: Right.

LJ: [Makes spraying sound]

RB: Yeah.

LJ: We got a tree and it [making sound of branches flowing down].

RB: That's good.

LJ: Out in the front we had a tree. We actually have the prettiest tree in the whole trailer court.

RB: Oh, okay.

LJ: That's why I like it there. I don't want to move.

RB: Okay. Well, I appreciate talking with you and you telling me your story. We will go ahead and end because I know you want to play bingo today.

LJ: Yeah, but there is another thing that you don't know about me.

RB: What's that?

LJ: I'm a piano player.

RB: You are?

LJ: I play by ear.

RB: Where?

LJ: When I was in Des Moines [Iowa], I entered the [Iowa] State Fair.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: With my piano playing.

RB: Right.

LJ: And when I was in Des Moines, I had three ribbons.

RB: Yeah.

LJ: And I competed with 120 contestants for three years straight, and I took first place.

RB: That's great!

LJ: I play by ear. I don't play by music. People just wants to sit and listen to me play. But now I don't have no leg so I can't do the sustaining pedal.

RB: Yeah, that's true.

[END OF RECORDING. END OF INTERVIEW]