

Interview with
LAWRENCE S. BARLOW

July 9, 2019

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LAWRENCE BARLOW

Content Warning: Contains words that are inherently offensive, insensitive and harmful.

Lawrence S. Barlow was interviewed by Stephanie Griswold on July 9, 2019 in Hildale, Washington County, Utah. He discusses his childhood, marriage, and raising of his children in Hildale, Utah as part of the Fundamental Latter-day Saints. Kathleen Broeder assisted.

SG: Lawrence could you spell your name please?

LB: My name is Lawrence Smith Barlow, Sr. L-A-W-R-E-N-C-E Smith common spelling Barlow B-A-R-L-O-W.

SG: Could you give us your age and place of birth?

LB: I'm 45 years old. I was born and raised in Hildale, Short Crick [Short Creek], Utah, Washington County, USA.

SG: Could you tell us about your parents and your childhood, how you grew up?

LB: So I'll orient I guess. My paternity is, my parents, the genealogy. I'm the son of Alvin Smith Barlow, Sr. Who is the son of John Yates Barlow, Sr. My mother is Linda Anne Bigley Barlow and I'm the oldest son of her children. Linda Anne Bigley is the oldest child of Jesse Bigley and Eva Bigley. Her maiden name was Atkinson. My father's mother was Maddie or Martha Jessup.

SG: You said you were born and raised here in Hildale where we're recording today. What sort of things did you do as a child for fun?

LB: Speak about being born here, I was born at the Hildale Clinic or as the State of Utah calls it, The Hildale Home where they facilitated the birthing of most of the community. Later in life when I applied for my passport, I found out my passport [birth certificate] was marked as a home birth. Which required me to do a lot more extra proof that I was who I said I was. Which I thought was humorous because it was The Hildale Home that I was born in, that's a medical facility.

In my youth, I grew up around a lot of public service and my father was the superintendent of the public school at the time. And was very, very involved and engaged with helping to organize the community and establish programs and things of that nature. The year I was born, he started, under the directive of Uncle Roy and Uncle Fred, the bishop, to do a project with the youth during the summer. And so he created what they called the Boy's Crew and later kinda got

dubbed the name of Uncle Roy's Boys. [inaudible] But that was a project for the summer that began the year I was born.

We lived in one of the homestead houses. The old Barton homestead. On what we now call Central Street. It was pretty tight quarters in the early years of my life. I remember as a child the community came together and helped my dad build a new home, a lot bigger home. It was basically framed and dried in with windows and doors and we evolved into that home as we outgrew the smaller home, so

SG: Was that typical in the community to outgrow homes and move into new places, or just keep adding on to the existing smaller homes?

LB: That's a really good question. The nature of the landownership in our community since the early forties was that all the land was owned in common with the trust. One of the conditions of the trust was that you could not mortgage or encumber, legally encumber the land. And so every improvement was self-financed or it was credit card financed or it was some other way owner build basically. And so we would go as far as we could with the money and then we would try to raise more money and then do another piece of a project. We didn't have the capacity to do it a construction loan. And in the end we didn't, it was not to be mortgaged.

And so it was quite typical in the area that a young man would be given an acre, basically an acre lot as a stewardship. They would fence it off and go work the summer and earn the concrete package and they would put in a basement or the foundation type of thing. By the next year he'd earn the framing package and was able to frame it and shingle it. The next big buy we'd put windows and doors in it. And over time it would become somewhat closed in and weathered. Usually about that time, from the outside it looked like you were makin really good progress. And the leadership would appoint a marriage and you could try to live with someone or you could try to fix up a trailer house or somethin. Or you could go over to your own house that's framed and finish off a couple rooms in the basement and you'd have the same square footage as a trailer. And you're just trying to put that investment into finishin your home.

But then life happens, and children come and you're finishing another room and another room and pretty soon you're living in a home that's not completely finished and of course the least important of trying to meet your needs was to finish the exterior. And a lot of time that was the last thing that got finished. There's a lot of bad press or bad story behind that saying that it was intentional and that it was a tax evasion kind of a thing. Which wasn't, wasn't just the reasoning behind all that.

But I grew up in a similar condition with we call it the new house or the big house and we evolved through the development of that home and helped finish rooms off and different things like that.

SG: At what age did you get to start helping with, whether it be finishing rooms or just chores around the house, and what kind of work?

LB: I always remember bein involved and bein included and having duties and chores. I think I moved down, it was the big boys that were moved to the new house, I was ... I think I was probably eleven or twelve, around that time. And I, it was pretty exciting that I got to move to the big house or the new house with some of the big boys.

My father's family dynamic was such that he, my mother was a plural wife, he had other ladies before my mother was come into the family. And he had quite a number of sons and then there was a break where he had mostly daughters. And when I was born I kind of broke that trend, and so I was always known as the biggest of the little boys. There was just a natural break in there that was always a bit of a challenge and my feelings didn't qualify to be one of the big boys finally. At age twelve I was old enough to be Ordained to the Priesthood as a Deacon. And I got to go to Priesthood meetings and different things and I finally, finally got to be a part of the big boys. And that happened a year that Uncle Roy died. So I was ordained a deacon in April of 86. And as summer came around I asked my father, I told him I wanted to go see Uncle Roy by myself as a Priesthood bearer. He chuckled and told me to go ahead and set it up. And I got to have one private interview with Uncle Roy in his home before he passed away. I'll always remember that relationship and that connection.

I saw him a time or two with more of a group, with father and sons, and later that year, I was twelve, when Uncle Roy died. My father had been traveling, he got home and he picked up the house phone and he called to check up on Uncle Roy and it was quite a short phone call and he turned around and left in quite a hurry. But then he stopped and came back upstairs and gathered the family around and told us that Uncle Roy had passed away.

I remember we had family prayer and then as he'd left to go over to Uncle Roy's that I asked him if I could come along. And he allowed me to come with him. As we came into Uncle Roy's bedroom, it was quite crowded with quite a number of him and his brothers and others that were close. And I...as a twelve-year-old I felt like I was under the feet a little bit ... or at risk of getting crowded out. I actually climbed over a rocking chair that was in the corner of the room and it had a little bit of a void space in the corner of the room, so I climbed back there and was just standing behind the rocking chair and watching.

And when it came time where his family and his ladies had everybody leave, just go out, we need some space, then my father kind of barked at me to get out from behind there and quit messin around and one of his ladies says he's fine he's not in the way. Everybody left the room and I was allowed to stay there and witness what was happenin'. That was pretty sacred and tender to me.

SG: Is there anything in particular that stuck with you, that Uncle Roy said to you in that one meeting you had with him, one-on-one?

LB: Yeah it was, we were rebuilding his home so he was staying in a temporary area of the house. The outside door opened right into his room where he was stayin. And so when I came for an interview, I knocked on the door and I just, I didn't feel to intrude, so I knocked and after the second knock I figured he was in an interview, and so I just sat down on the doorstep [inaudible] and I just felt a voice say, y'know, be at peace. And I just sat out there for almost forty minutes waitin, and finally one of his ladies opens the door and kinda chided me a little bit and says "there you are, Uncle Roy's waitin on ya, he's been waiting on you." And then I was kind of feeling a little embarrassed 'cause I'd kept him waitin. When I came in, he had the ability to wiggle his ears it was just a fun thing he'd do to get especially the children, to smile and be cheerful and so I was pretty stressed that I'd kept him waitin. He came in and he just wiggled his ears at me and he said "I told her you were here a half hour ago." [laughter] It was just interesting to watch the human dynamic of the family and realize that he was just human and good-natured. He was ninety-six at the time.

And he was bed-ridden so I just came over to his side of the bed and ... it was... the only thing that really stands out that I remember specifically about it was I asked him what he wanted me to do for the summer 'cause I felt like I was reporting in and ready to do whatever the Prophet wanted me to do. And he asked me to spend the summer and work with my father and the Boys Crew. So I felt quite a commission to go make the Boys Crew work better [chuckles].

SG: That was such a good story I lost my train of thought for a second.

LB: One of the things that I observed and I'll include this for the history of Uncle Roy's passing, standing from my vantage point ... I referred to his ladies as Aunt so, there was Aunt Shirley and Aunt Meale and then Uncle Truman. And they were standing around his bed and they kept opening his shirt and just feeling his chest and they were searching for somethin' and I thought it curious. But later at Uncle Roy's funeral, Uncle Truman talked about that, that Uncle Roy had asked him to not bury him if there was any heat over his heart. And that he had expected or intended to be resurrected in three days. And so that's what they were doing, they were feeling for any sign of heat over his heart. I was a witness to that.

SG: With Uncle Roy's passing in 1986, obviously one of the big things that was going on in the community was the centennial split. As a pre-teen, how did you experience that, what did you notice or was it not even really something that you were aware of?

LB: In the Priesthood history they talk about the Priesthood counsel split in 78 and later that year Richard S. Jessup, Uncle Rich we called him, passed away. I would have been four years old at that time, I don't remember seein him, I don't

remember going to church or anything during that time. We were meeting in the public school facility. At that time it was the South Aud they called it, South Auditorium. By the time, 79, 80 I started grade school in 1980 and I remembered more of the school dynamic but by then they'd built a new addition on the north end which they called the north Auditorium. Which would hold quite a bit more of the community.

During that time just before, I guess in 83, was this, what they called the split. Between 80 to I guess around 78 Uncle Roy had the shingles and was a lot removed from the people as far as he didn't come to a lot of public meetings. Or we didn't see him as often, but it wasn't 'till 83 that he came back from being sick or whatever. I remember more between the 80-86 timeframe.

My father ran the microphone. The audio controls for the church and it was quite a simple amplifier of just a rotary dial, but we sat in some little chairs in front of him right at the top of what we called the ramp, or the hallway, or down the hall. I just remember those meetings were quite combative or they seemed quite hostile and of course, being quite confused or not knowing or appreciating what was happening or wasn't happening or whatever, that it seemed like there was a lot of hostility.

During those days I didn't like to go to church, I didn't want to. I guess during a lot of that time my father was okay with me not going if I didn't want to go and so I wouldn't. But it was in that North Aud.

By 1986 I was in sixth grade, and we had started building what we called the Civic Center at the time, and it's now known as the Meeting House or the LSJ Meeting house. With the trust changing around it will become the Community Center again. But when we started building it, it was called the Civic Center. I got to help tie rebar and do clean up. I don't remember too much, there was a few times that I got to help like, pour some of the concrete of the flat work concrete and it was more just to get in the middle of it so you feel like you're included. I wasn't too productive at the time. I got to be a part of and witness that. My Father was getting a lot of pressure from outside churches and from the dissident group or the Centennial Park group that split off that they wanted equal access to use the school house for meetings and things. There was a lot of tension goin' on so it was getting to be more and more important to separate the school from church functions and things like that.

The thing that was quite impressive around the time of Uncle Roy's passing was, 1985 the, well, around 80 or 81 the fire district was formed. My father helped to form the fire district.

It was also around some of that time that we changed from the old Short Crick School District and things like that in the community to becoming a unified school district with a grade school, high school program. It took a lot of legislation and things of that nature so he was quite involved in that as well. In

1985 he helped, along with his brother Dan and Sam, helped form the formal incorporation of the town [inaudible]. So there was a lot of news media and press about that building up to 85.

And then Uncle Roy, well, it was between 80 and 86 somewhere in there was the issue with the LeBaron scare where there was, Rulon R. had been killed and others that had been murdered the LaBarons had to issue a threat, a death threat against Uncle Roy. I remember it was during the summer with the Boy's Crew and the ATF and the FBI and the Sherriff, Sheriff Prince I think was his name at the time. They created a blockade around the town and I remember the snipers were on the water tanks and things like that overlooking Uncle Roy's home. Trying to provide some protection for him. It was an interesting contrast to the stories of the raid and different things like that. It was quite a contrast to witness as a young child, the fearsome stories of the raid and witness the protection of that same law enforcement around Uncle Roy. That created quite a tender love and respect for law enforcement as far as I was concerned. That was kind of happening in some of that time.

It was during 1982 I believe it was, during the summer we got a big monsoon flood that hit. That was the day it washed out the old wooden bridge that went across the creek that connected the towns basically. That was a really big deal. That was kind of a big landmark day was the day the bridge washed out. So I remember that happenin'.

SG: So backtracking a little bit, you mentioned the school house and a little bit about schooling, but can you give us a quick, kind of, run through of what schools you went to and what it was like having a technically public school in a religious community?

LB: It was just school, we didn't, there was no, I guess in the 60's and 70's they had built an Academy for a high school program that was a religious academy. I think it's the genesis of what, today, the Centennial Park still has the Academy program. It wasn't a real distinction about religious school versus a public school, we just went to school. The community was quite united at the time and we had some exceptional teachers, staff that was able to make do with very little. I started school in 80-81 was my first grade and it was at the public school in Colorado City.

Around 87, then Utah, had come in and build the Phelps Elementary, it's now called the Water Canyon School, and that was pretty exciting to have a new school in town. Part of that was because Washington County was paying a stipend to Arizona to educate the children from Hildale. They found it more economical to just build a school.

I transferred up to the Phelps Elementary in the seventh grade so when they opened that school I was in the seventh grade. I attended two years there and then came back to the high school program, the public high school in Colorado City.

A couple things that happened around that time with the breaking away of the school, it started to really accentuate the more divide I mean there was a split as it were around that 83 mark. When Uncle Roy died in 86 it became very, very articulated. 87 we had this new school and it became a little bit more fractured in the us-versus-them or the Utah school versus the Colorado school. About that time the Academy was built and suddenly it was become quite a bit more compartmentalized. But the high school project was still fairly unifying. In order to attend the high school, Utah would only pay a certain amount.

The difference that the school district had to have per pupil to make the budgets work, we had to pay ourselves, like a tuition. To pay our tuition, the community or the church had set up through the Improvement Association a tuition fund and we could basically borrow that tuition from the Improvement Association and then we'd have to be paying that back to them, similar to the perpetual education fund kind of a deal. What the Mormon church did early on. So we paid for a portion, I don't know what the ratio was, but we had to pay a portion of our high school tuitions to be able stay at the community and attend the Arizona high school.

About the time of 1986 then Mohave Community College was startin to move a more permanent presence in the community and they were just co-locating in the public school and the school district had given them a couple rooms at one end of the school to use. It was enough for them to establish a Dean and basically they would, school would get out around three or four they would come through, clean, and the evenings, the classes would open up again for the college classes. That started to pick up a lot more momentum. I remember that was a big deal to see the college come to town. I graduated from the Colorado City high school and I was given a scholarship to MCC the year I graduated was in 1992.

That year, that fall started a, the first paramedic program for Mohave Community College. I had a scholarship established for that and I was going to go on to be a paramedic. We ended up doin my basic EMT [Emergency Medical Technician] course through Mohave Community College. Then I, at the request of the fire chief, I held back a year to do my paramedic while the older group went through. And so that was quite a landmark time.

At age twelve I, well I'd better finish my education stuff. The, some of the sons of John Y Barlow wanted to create a private university. And so they formed the John Y. Barlow University. We were trying to pioneer a nursing program in that, so I came out of high school and we enrolled in the John [inaudible] Barlow University, or we just called it the Barlow University. A lot of those classes were being held in what we called the meeting house or the Civic Center. Because we were trying to "break into the market" all of our staff that were our teaching staff were already nurses and very accomplished individuals. But they held such a strict standard they were very, very assertive in the educational standard 'cause they wanted us to really set the standard high.

Myself and my brother Preston were the first male nurses from the community that had then typically been a women's kind of a job and for us to be enrolled in

that program was quite an interesting break from tradition. Aunt Lydia was the primary care provider for a lot of the community and she came and spoke with us on our very first day of that class and really gave us a straightforward conversation about professionalism and things of that nature. It was good. It was all private pay, there was no scholarships, we paid dearly for those credit hours.

In the end we were about two years into the program we'd done all the general eds, we were basically to an LPN board status where we needed to do some clinicals, we needed to get our LPN's done and take on our last part of our course. In order to do that the hospital would not allow us to do clinicals because we weren't Jcaho Accredited [Joint Commission health care accreditation]. So we took it on to figure out what we'd need to do to get our Accreditation. We did all the paperwork, got it all ready, we just needed \$10,000 fee from the University to pay for the accreditation. It was during a time in the community where Rulon Jeffs was not really supportive of that, he felt like it was a financial drain on the community that didn't need to be there. He didn't really care for it. Anyway, the end result was they refused the Accreditation, or refused the fee we never filed for accreditation. And we had to shut the program down.

SG: In what year was that?

LB: That would have been around 94, 95, somewhere in there. We took the six of us that were in that course, were referred down to Hurricane to a care center and we took another thirty-day [chuckle] course to become a CNA. The care center certified us as CNAs. We did some additional training, became home help aides. We'd [chuckling] been through basically all the book learning side of an RN program. We just hadn't got our clinicals in. So I took that and just invested it in a different route with my career goal was to be a flying nurse on a helicopter and so if I couldn't get to it by going RN, I was gonna work it the other direction by EMT or maybe a Paramedic, go from Paramedic to a flight medic, either way we were gonna get on that chopper. So I did, ultimately became a paramedic. One of the other disciplines I developed over the years was the wildland firefighting and the line medic and the wilderness medic stuff.

On one fire, it was called the Sanford fire, up in Central Utah. It was a big campaign fire. They had to, I flew for the first time on a helicopter for about two hours as we flew the perimeter of the fire. And I was so sea sick, nauseated, messed up [laughter], I laugh because I probably should've gone gotten good on a helicopter before I set a career goal to be on a helicopter. But that was an accomplishment. I was a medic, I was a medical unit leader, and I was, we were medivacing people off the fire. In essence, I met my career goal, it wasn't what I was hopin it would be. I ended up kinda adjusting after that.

SG: One thing that is, I guess commonly known or assumed, is that the prophets had a lot of say in what the community members would pursue career-wise. Which, you know, how did that come about in your case?

LB: That's actually a good story. When I got out of high school, my father encouraged me to go and present myself to Rulon Jeffs as the prophet following Uncle Roy. So I met with him in private and basically told him what was going on and I was done with high school and reportin for duty. He seemed a little frustrated, there was already a bit of a shift in the tenor of talk that it was, 2000 was comin and the start of the millennium and we don't have time for all this, or we don't have time for that, and we need to really just focus on our preparedness to be lifted up and all this kind of thing.

When I asked him what he wanted me to do, he just says "I'm not an employment agency, what do you wanna do?" And I told him that I had a desire to be a flight nurse on a helicopter. His first reaction was one of a little bit of a rebuke, like "do you really think we're gonna need that?" I guess just being a little bit naive or just young and full of ambition, I said "Well, Uncle Roy said that the time would come when they would say how far is it from Colorado City?" he said "That's right, he did say that." I said "I think during that time we will be bringing people here to be healed by the faith." And he just said "That's right, that's right. Now you go do that."

And so yeah, I was directed to go down that path, but it was, he asked for my input and I told him that's what I thought I would like to do. He kind of felt around a little bit then he said "Okay, go do it." So that's, you know I talked about kind of breaking the mold as far as, like a male nurse in the community type of a thing. There wasn't a whole lot of public push back because it was an appointed, I was sent to go do this work, as it were. So, that helped a lot. But all of my work with the fire department and stuff was all volunteer and so I had to do other things.

I attended a lot of technical schools, a lot of, I guess I should back up and tell you that my paramedic program was through Dixie State, at the time and I graduated the certificate program for paramedic through Dixie College. That's now Dixie State University, at the time I think it was Dixie College. That was in 97, 98 was when I graduated as a paramedic. I attended Phoenix College, I've been to, attended a lot of the national fire academy classes, just a lot of certificate courses. I've got three or four binders full of certificates. If I'd've just gone to a college and got my degree I guess that'd be one thing, but it was all just continuing education.

SG: You mentioned that you went to the public high school. What was the difference in the public high school versus being able to go to the academy that you mentioned? Like, was there a reason that you went public versus the academy? Was it competitive? Did you get into the academy?

LB: The academy in the late 70s, 80s for some reason was not appealing to my father, or to his brothers or whatever and during that time my father formed a private school called the Hildale Educational Institute that a lot of my older brothers and

sisters, and we just made a room in the house, a school room, and they each were pursuing their own curriculum.

Then when he got the high school district finally approved through the state, then they transferred their credits from the Hildale Educational Institute, was an accredited private school, and so they were able to transfer their credits into the public school. There was, it was either one or two years remaining and they were able to graduate with a high school diploma. The academy was, the program was, it kind of lost a lot of the public, general public support after Uncle Roy's passing. The split really accentuated a lot of it, it kind of tried to hold on as it were. With Uncle Roy's passing, they kind of abandoned the facility, it was actually up by the meeting house, was where it was located, it's where the Barlow University Tech building is. And in time they ended up relocating the program for their high school program out to Centennial.

But I was first, second grade and then the seniors from the academy would come down and do tutoring and different things. And so it wasn't like there was this grand divide, it was, I remember the interaction. There was a lot of tension when they formed the public school. I didn't even, I don't ever remember even considering going to the academy. It was either, by the time I was ready to go to high school, it was well established that we, well we'd just do high school at my father's school, the public school. When I was in high school that would've been, I don't remember the exact year, but it would have been somewhere around 1990.

The old academy facility had been abandoned, broken down, whatever and it was just a place of a lot of vandalism and trouble. Bishop asked to have that demolished and took down. My really only recollection of going in that building was when we were tearing it down. We didn't want the thing just knocked down and burnt kind of a deal, he wanted us to salvage the old timber and different things of that nature. We literally got up there and tore the roof off and tried to bend the nails straight and salvage what we could out of it. It was mostly an adobe structure so it just got pushed over and recycled, cleaned up. That's my recollection of it.

SG: Earlier you started saying something about when you were twelve, but then you went on to finish your educational track. Do you recall what that segue was going to be?

LB: Twelve was a big year for me. And it was around the passing of Uncle Roy, it was also, I was now a Priesthood bearer as a Deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood. I was so eager to be part of the big boys. All my older brothers had, or most of 'em, had worked at the dairy. When I turned twelve, they had all moved on basically. [Chuckling] I took the initiative to go and apply for a job, at the age of twelve without consulting my father first, which I'm sure was less than impressive to him. Which, I found out. But I kind of, kind of just pondered for a couple months and then, there was a, between Uncle Roy's death and the start of the new year, there was a police officer in our community that was killed in the line of duty.

The day of his funeral, Rick White's [Deputy Marshal Richard C. White, 1987]] funeral, was the day I started working at the dairy. So I, that's when I started my employment. But it was just, I'd get up at three in the morning, let me rephrase that, my mother would get up at three and get me up and take me to my work and drop me off. I was paid in milk, basically so that the family would take the milk home for the babies and breakfast. So for four years I don't remember so much pay as it were, but if you were to go back and put the value behind the milk provided for the family it was, I guess a pretty significant income for a twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen-year-old.

SG: So obviously you were a hard worker and you mentioned that being part of your upbringing. What type of student were you?

LB: Wow. Incriminating question.

SG: [Laughter]

LB: My dynamics of my father's family was such that, in my age group there was myself and Preston and Carol. Carol was a little bit older than Preston and I, Preston was about six months younger than me. Carol got held back into the grade with us, first grade. The three of us were always going through school together. Preston and Carol were 4.0 students, they would irritate me cause they would fight over the extra credit points. I was just like, I was a C average. I struggled to comprehend math and some of that kind of stuff. So that was a little frustrating to try to, I quit trying to keep up with them. Interestingly enough was when I went into my nursing program, those two went in as well. When we got into a subject matter of my, where I actually realized this had a purpose type of a thing, I maintained 4.0 in all my college stuff. [Chuckling] a little bit has to do with the mindset I guess. I worked for it.

SG: Before college, was there a subject that you really, really liked? You mention that you weren't super on track with math, but maybe something that played the opposite role.

LB: What's interesting is my freshman year in high school, I was a little bit of a slacker I guess, I'd get up in the morning and my first period was biology one and due to the fact that I wasn't there on time so much that I flunked biology one. My high school counselor arranged for me to do a remedial biology one course over the summer, through correspondence. I still remember that as the day, that little thing is what turned my barometer towards biology or medicine or that I got a real love for it. The biology book y'know is the two inch textbook and it's clear full of fluff and things that you would get quizzed on, little gotcha things that had no impact, had no, it was just test taking right? Over the summer that thing got condensed into a little, y'know, half inch pamphlet that wasn't even color, it was just black and white. But it was so boiled down to just the pure need-to-know facts and simple truths.

I, to this day I wish I'd kept that little thing. I was required to mail it back with my test sheet and stuff like that. In that remedial course I ended up getting an A. So I could actually move past that, but that created a little bit of a passion for the biology's and stuff like that. Where it kind of put my foundation towards medicine and different things. The other thing I experienced in that was how to deal with failure, I think it has a lot to do with where I am today.

Preston and Carol, they didn't deal with failure at all. It was not an option and I think they're still struggling to deal with, come to terms with our culture and the breakdown of our culture.

[RECORDER TURNED OFF]

SG: Alright, just really quickly earlier you mentioned the Improvement Association, can you tell us what that is?

LB: Its official title is called the Colorado City Improvement Association. It was an entity that was formed basically by the church and by the leadership where the church couldn't engage in business and the trust couldn't engage in business. Then they formed that entity to where they could, the things with the tuition was one function, the other function was where the community came together and we built two schools and later a third for the school district. And the school district was able to just pay the lease on it and so they owned three of the new schools. It was a form and a function for the church, but it was a legal entity that did all of its commercial leasing and special projects like the tuition and things like that.

SG: And just now when you said that we built the schools, what do you mean by that? Like, you personally, or the community had them built?

LB: Yes. It's the royal we as the people, but it's also I personally helped put the block up and helped finish and do the schools. The first school was what we called the Marvin L. Darger building it was pretty exciting cause we got Governor Bruce Babitt to come out to the dedication of the school. It was pretty exciting times. We did the David Broadbent building next, and then the third one was actually quite an interesting deal.

It was an emergency scenario and Uncle Fred just told the community in the far work projects that he wanted this, we had thirty days before school started. He went out in an empty field and said "I want a school right here and I want it done in thirty days and I want the school to open on time. And if you don't believe it can be done, you're disinvited. Don't even come on this site. If you believe it can be done then come." There was some 'round the clock effort and it was mostly concentrated or donated labor and effort. The school opened on time.

So that's the school over by the old candy shop or what you would now know as Cecil's Mama Cecil's. So that's why they --

SG: Arizona and Richards...

LB: Arizona and Richards. That was a middle school campus. It's owned by the Trust.

SG: Oh, are you talking about the building that doesn't have any basketball hoops? Or well, it has one basketball hoop.

LB: Yeah, yeah they took 'em all down.

SG: There's one, now. I noticed. When you were talking about your medical training you mentioned the acronym LPNs could you tell us what that stands for?

LB: Okay. In a nursing, the registered nursing program was usually a two year program and when you complete the first year, then you're a Licensed Practical Nurse. That gives you the ability to start clinicals and do your clinicals under an LPN license before you can actually finish as an RN and take boards and be a Registered Nurse.

SG: You also mentioned during that conversation Aunt Lydia. Could you tell us her full name and her significance in the community?

LB: Her name, I believe, is Lydia Johnson Jessup. She was the first wife of Uncle Fred Jessup, Fred M. Jessup. She at an early age became the midwife of the community and she took it on with a lot more than just midwifery. Her and Uncle Fred had an old Hearse back in the 50s, 60s, they did an ambulance service as it were, so they are the grandparents or they're the parents of our emergency services of our community. She was also given a lot of leeway to work under other doctors licenses to do, like, some simple dental care and y'know instacare kind of stuff, with a little bit of sutures and that type of thing. Aunt Lydia is synonymous with the go-to person for our medical needs. She was dearly loved and respected.

I got married in 1996 and she had a massive stroke in 95. She passed away shortly after we were married.

SG: It's my understanding that most of the children born at the Hildale Home were brought in with her as the midwife. Are you included in that list?

LB: For sure, yes. What's interesting is she would go to state conventions of midwives and she was by far the authority of the most natural born children that she had overseen as a midwife. She didn't do the spinal taps and the blocks and the anesthesia stuff, so the children born in her care and clinic were, seemed a lot healthier and more alert, things like that. So she was called on quite often to kinda share her wisdom and stuff like that.

SG: Alright. Was it common for women to be in positions like Aunt Lydia's? Or was she kind of a one-of-a-kind?

LB: No. It was a sacred trust, but stereotypically that was their place or it was her place. There was a little more [of] a break in the norm when my older brother

became a medical doctor and came back and took on a lot of the primary care functions where before it was mostly women that were doing that role in the community.

SG: Okay. So let's cover up a little bit more of your childhood. Let's talk about your teen years, your high school years. Maybe things that you did now that you had comfortably been in your Aaronic Priesthood position.

LB: What's interesting is when I was fourteen we had a significant fire in the community. It was my Uncle Truman's barn burned down in the back yard and that was a big deal. Shortly after that we had a wheat field that caught fire. It was a big deal because we had come together as the community to build a home for Uncle Bill Draper. It was built on the edge of a wheat field. And the fire just about wiped out that house. Our fire department positioned themselves to protect that house, but they put themselves at the head of a moving fire. It just about cost the lives of some of our firemen. It was a pretty substantial, impactful incident.

I had been workin at the dairy when that went down. I was walkin past it and ended up getting involved and helping mop up and clean up. Because I had a desire or an aptitude or whatever, then I was invited to continue or to be a part of it and so I gravitated to the fire department. So at age fourteen I started working around the fire department. The insurance company wouldn't allow me to be a recruit and do dangerous training 'till I was sixteen.

So my oldest brother was Kevin and he was a captain at the time. The chief, him, and the battalion chief basically put me in the dispatch center. At age fourteen I started taking my emergency calls and started my work at dispatch. I worked there for almost twenty five years. A lot of those volunteer. Towards the end there was a paid position when it transitioned into a public safety dispatch center. Fourteen I started my real career with the dispatch and the fire department.

At age sixteen, I had two older brothers that had been helping build and fix and finish the meeting house. The bishop had assigned them some master keys to the place and gave them the responsibility to make sure it was locked up at night. It seemed like a pretty important job. When I turned sixteen those two brothers had graduated high school and were going to college in Cedar. They asked Uncle Fred, the bishop, what they should do about that. He told them to gather up two little brothers that could do that work and so my brother Preston and I, at the age of sixteen, was given the responsibility to be the lockup crew for the church house. We did that 'till I was about eighteen.

Around eighteen, Uncle Fred asked us to be more involved with the dances, with the programs, and more and more and more but it was myself and Preston and some cousins that were twins, Porter and Dale. So we were workin' this, lockup stuff, and when it came to the functions he would just have us in the back or the shadows encouraging the young people to come be a part of things and not hang out. Wasn't really anything too grandubulous, it was just, we were willing to be an extension of Uncle Fred.

About the time I turned eighteen then we noticed that when Rulon came, when Uncle Rulon would come to the meetings or to the programs then it would disperse and there would be a couple thousand people trying to leave the parking lot all at once. And he'd get locked [in] the gridlock 'cause he was parked close to the building. I took the initiative to ask him what can we do to better support you? It was interesting. I talked to you earlier about being given the assignment to go be a flight nurse right. When he asked me what I wanted to do originally, I told him I wanted to be a bodyguard for him. He just basically told me that it was not an occupation, that was a church or priesthood calling. It wasn't a job. That's when we went in the direction of the nursing. A little bit later, when we were under that other assignment from Uncle Fred, we asked what we could do to be a support to him as he came and went, and he extended the invite to the four of us to be a support team to Wendell Nielsen, his priesthood appointed bodyguard.

Once certain individuals in the community heard that there was a church security program, they came pretty aggressively and said 'if there's gonna be church security, then I'm gonna be involved and I'll be in charge and I'll be this and I'll be that'. It quickly became quite a bit bigger than just a support team like we were extended the invite to. About four on church security and it was more specifically geared around events at the church house. It was lot more formalized.

SG: Was a position on this security detail, kind of, did it become like a coveted sort of position or more of a strategic position for a specific set of people? Like coveted generally, or wanted...

LB: Yeah. I would use the term political. It was quite a political maneuvering. For myself, I didn't really care, I was about my work. Certain ones got involved and began to kind of, I was already at the core right? And so I started gettin kind of pushed to the doors, to the perimeter, further and further out. I recognized this wasn't my creature, it wasn't my project. I was just willing to fit in wherever I needed. I will tell ya, the very last interview I had in private with Rulon was, he asked me if I was still a part of his private detail. I told him I was and that I'd been asked to be on the perimeter, that I saw him come and go when I was there. And he was quite relieved about it. Guess I'll back it up a little bit.

When we were invited to be a support team for him, he paid some pretty significant money for some high-end secure communication, radio, so scramble technology and I was the one that helped put that together. Not knowing his family dynamics, not knowing what was goin on, I was invited to fly with the airplane up to pick him up. When I got up to Salt Lake, then Ron Rohbock was a part of his security detail up there that was under Warren's direction. Warren sent him to go over and meet me at [inaudible]. I didn't know Ron, I didn't know Warren, I didn't really care. My relationship was with Rulon. It was just, whatever. I recognized him as someone in the congregation, but I didn't have any respect for who he was. So when he started quizzing me down on the radios and the what are we doin' and why are we doin' it, I was probably a little less than respectful or reverent, I was, I just told him 'I don't know who you are, I don't really care to talk to you about it.'

SG: And that was rotten.

LB: Yeah. And it was, I think it was, kind of started the battle between me and Warren. Because he felt like I was treadin' on his turf and I was young, I just went bought the book, self-taught,. Y'know. I did the work, and I found the textbooks from Doctor Colby, he was the one that did executive protection training for the CIA and the big boys. I took it pretty seriously. When I talked to Rulon it was really matter of fact and it was not of political maneuvering and I think he could see that. I'll have to tell you a funny that goes with that. He had a little black book, we believed in marriage by revelation thru the Prophet whether it be direct or [inaudible], who to marry. So as a young man, I didn't date.

When we became eighteen or an elder you would come and present yourself to him and he would add your name and date of birth and who's your father and mother and some things into his little black book. Porter and Dell were the oldest, the oldest unmarried men in town. So when we would come and sit around with him, he would kinda watch and he'd reach over and pick up that book and he'd kinda watch everybody and he'd pop it open and he was really just kina messing with 'em. I got real desensitized to that quite quickly. Just like, whatever. He was playful in that. They took it way more serious than I did as far as that, I could tell what he was doin'. After a minute he'd put it down and say 'Alright. Enough with that, let's get on with business.' Those boys'd just be sweatin' bullets.

I would always just present it to him as professional as I could. I think he always appreciated that. When Warren moved down and he actually, Rulon moved his son Nephi down, then it became a lot less engaged because they had it covered. Ultimately when Warren was in charge of security, then I was discharged from security duty. That was fortunately before the reputation of what they called 'The God Squad' nonsense. That was quite a bit after my time. That's one little track we went down.

SG: You said that kind of started when you were sixteen, but how long were you doing it? You mentioned, sixteen, eighteen.

LB: I got married when I was twenty one and Rulon passed away what, 2002? That's about when I was done. So however long that was.

SG: What year did you get married?

LB: I got married in 96. So it would have been around 90.

SG: And that was a Prophet revealed marriage?

LB: Yeah it was a placement marriage or an appointed marriage. There's some faith promoting stuff behind that that gives me a witness that it was the mind and will of God as far as what I, my personal testimony that there're things that happened outside of what I felt like people could manipulate. We're almost twenty four years married and it's been a profound marriage.

When I came out of the nursing program, and went into the Certified Nursing Assistant Program, then the home health aide and I started working for a home

health company in town. They wanted me to go to Salt Lake and do, what they call an immersion course, and durable medical equipment technician. So I went to Salt Lake and loved home care. They put up with me for forty five days of pretty intense one-on-one training. I had learned how to not only [do] the set up and service, but also do repairs and service and trouble shoot and manage durable medical equipment operations.

We got going down that path a bit and the company sold out. The new national chain came in and realized that the DME [Durable Medical Equipment] was just me and a small operation out here which was really just a maneuvering to make the syllabus look like it was a lot more than it was. That got shut down and it seemed like we kinda missed the boat on some of the—I got married in 96 and in February 11th of 2000, my oldest son was born in Phoenix. He was born with the condition of x-linked hydrocephalus.

Prior to his birth I was driving a truck, I was doin' a bunch of stuff to try to make a living. I expressed to my father, I felt like I was a jack of all trades master of none. He kind of rebuked me at the time he said 'that's the spirit of discouragement and I won't participate in that.' I'm like; alright. Within a couple months after that my son was born and I realized that all of this; from the nursing school, to the CNA, to the Home Health Aide to the DME to the Paramedic to everything that I had done in all of this, was manifest in preserving the life of my son. It just seemed like it was quite a unique school to prepare me for the work that I would be called to do. I knew enough about genetics, y'know the simple XX and the XY and you draw the diagram and so I was explaining that to my wife with our first son and we had another daughter we tried for another son, knowing that our oldest was not expected to live beyond three years.

Our next genetic event was spontaneous identical triplet boys. About five minutes before they were born, in Phoenix, we found out all three of them were also, had the same condition. But of course what the geneticists are saying, that's one genetic event, we're still lookin at the odds and it's still 50/50 I mean. And we end up with another daughter and then we had another son, Junior, and he was also effected. We ended up with one more daughter, for a total of five daughters and five sons. The last child we had was so, it was a traumatic experience, it was another experience where I heard the voice say to me that enough is enough. We, as parents, got to just agree then come to terms with the idea that we won't have an heir and our daughters will marry and live on and our name ends in this generation. It's an interesting dynamic.

SG: There's a thought amongst outsiders from this community that the religion has a kind of a --

LB: Practice of arraigning marriages that produce --

SG: Well, no that was not the question that I was gonna ask, but if you'd like to address it we can. My question was gonna be that the church has a kind of a mentality about what it means when a family produces ill, disabled or otherwise unhealthy children. Whether it's one or three or five. It seems like that kinda

ebbed and flowed of what it meant to have a child with a disability. How did that impact the –

LB: I can tell ya that my growing up years I had an older brother that had hydrocephalus. Not X-linked like my children had, which was a syndrome. I believe my brother had hydrocephalus maybe secondary to the trauma of birth or something like that, I don't know what it was. It wasn't spina bifida, it wasn't anything else, it was just seemed like he had hydrocephalus. It was undiagnosed until he was three or four years old. Whatever happened, it compensated enough to where he could, he survived.

I grew up with the story, I don't remember the story happening because it was long before my time, but one of the Patriarchs of the community was sittin in our home in a visit and my older brother Kendall was crawling around and they knew that there was something special about him, but they didn't know what it was. He made the comment to our parents, or his parents was, that child is one of the most valiant in heaven he couldn't forget all that he knew and God had locked up his communication so he wouldn't talk about it.

So we had always grew up with this, in our family it was a sense that the special needs children were extra special spirits or were more precious to our Creator or something. Of course that was passed on to me when my son was born and my father expressed that and expressed his admiration that God would trust me with a special needs child. I think a lot of that was just coping and made an impact on us then. We didn't never feel like our children were burdened or I know sometimes there's a sense of guilt or shame or punishment that's attached to children, but our culture didn't really go there.

Later in life, when we were dealing with the triplets and stuff, then we were workin with some of the neurologists and different things and it led to, there was some discussion from the media. There were people that had left the community that were makin comments about this idea of 'bleed the beast' and we would somehow genetically arrange for children to be born that would be a burden on society and all this type of thing and it was an effort, y'know to get even with the state for what they did or didn't do. It was all just a bunch of funk. I know about that because of my years on Safety Net, those issues came up when they memorialized it in their damn primer. But it had nothing to do with anything we grew up with.

SG: Did you see a change later on, on how, that perhaps, another thing that is commonly heard about the community is that eventually the church changed from these special needs people being extra special spirits to them being a punishment to the parents for y'know, being wicked or being unworthy in some way. Is there validity to that?

LB: I never experienced any of that conversation. The language of 'bleed the beast' became very prevalent in the press and it became more the public shaming not from within the culture but from without. Some of the very people that we trusted with our sacred family details, I feel like tried to capitalize and they kind of

sensationalized it into something that – I know that in the general culture of America, about the time my sons were born, there was quite a shift to, I don't know if you want to call it the eugenics or something, what gives you the right to have more than one or two children? Then it was more, if you know this marriage is gonna produce these expensive babies then you're gonna burden the state with the cost of Medicare whatever, Medicaid. Y'know, what gives you the right to do that? We got a lot of that from the nurses and different social workers.

When we were in Phoenix at St. Joseph's Hospital my oldest son was born, his head was nineteen and a half inches around and he was nineteen and a half inches tall. And that required about four to six inches of padding under his back. There's a lot to the story. I was downstairs in my wife's room sleeping on a cot. About five, six in the morning I heard a voice just loud and clear say "get up, someone's dying". I sprung out of bed and checked my wife and she was breathing, and I heard that voice say "not her". I ran up the stairs to the unit where, the NICU [Neonatal Intensive Care Unit]. The secretary had kind of ducked under the cabinet right then to pick up somethin that was on the floor and I just had such an urgency, I had observed the doctor use a code to get in the door the day before. Which happened to be the same code I used to get in the fire station. So it was hard to not know. I just punched the code and walked in. As I walked in I could hear the alarms ringing in my sons pod.

Most of the nurses were down on the other end of the floor and I took time to wash up and scrub and while I was scrubbing I noticed that this particular nurse was sitting in the pod with her back to the icelet and was basically just reading a magazine, facing the window. Comes back to where all this training came in and I was, as a medical equipment technician, as a paramedic, all these things, I understood how they worked and if you just grab an icelet and open it begins to alarm and it's called a parent alarm. If you don't know to find the release somewhere when you open it then it'll alarm.

I already knew all that from my training so I just walked into the pod, opened the thing, it didn't alarm, I started moving the padding back under him, I looked at the monitors, sat's [oxygen saturation of the blood] were in the 40s, his heart rate was in the 40s. He just took some big breaths and was just really struggling to get 'em. I saw his oxygen start to come back around I just turned the oxygen up on him and just kind of took the initiative. Once I was comfortable with the fact that he was stabilizing, he was still in trouble, but he was stabilizing. [inaudible] on the monitor and [inaudible] on the alarms. I was watchin her when I did it.

When the alarms quit ringin her head picked up and she looked out the window which told me she was listening. She glanced over her shoulder and realized that I was there at his side. Of course she threw her book on the floor and jumped up and started scolding me for things. I just basically let her know that I'd be in charge of my son's care from that point on. She could go back to readin her book if she wanted. It caused quite a stir. I never saw that nurse again. Whether she got transferred or, there were some stories but, I never heard officially.

When I said I felt like a jack of all trades and master of none, and then in my son's life I recognized that all of that was an intense schooling to prepare me to be the confident parent and provider for my son. Later I found out he was just a graduate course for when the triplets came. That was the [inaudible].

When we were talkin about this culture of holding them up or shifting to where they were now somehow now a punishment, I never experienced that shift. The only thing ran that was from within the culture was that they were precious spirits. When the economic collapse of the culture happened it began to wear quite heavy on the parents and the providers. Where before we had a network of family and friends and the church and the community that was very supportive. When my wife was carrying the triplets there was, every day, a different couple women would come in and fix her meals and help her keep her house up. She was very large with the triplets. As soon as she was no longer part of the culture, and she was in a wheelchair, and had three sons in wheelchairs, they were quite content to shun and there had been a 180 turn in that sense of community. It was better to be right than to do right at that point. So we did experience that. But it wasn't so much a sense of a punishment or guilt or shame type of thing.

There came a time after we came back without the support of the community, our sons were grown to a place, well, my oldest son died when he was six. The triplets, the middle triplet died when he was nine weeks old. So we had the two triplets and Junior. Five years ago we came back to the community after being separated, kind of jumpin ahead. It's been about two and a half years now since they hit a growth spurt, their teenage adolescence and puberty basically, they started becoming physically too big to be able to care for without having the proper facilities around. It was taking quite a toll on their health. My wife and I had to make a very difficult decision to put our sons into a state care program, with a care center. They're healthy, well cared for, but we miss the association of – they're in Orem, which is a three and a half-four hour drive sometimes.

One of the circumstances around having special needs children in our home, the state was trying to capture Warren. One of their tactics was the Attorney Generals got together and they agglomerated all state services under the umbrella of the Attorney General for this community. Their intent was to pull the services back [so] that the ones that really needed the services would have to come out of the community and they could be rescued. The second one was they wanted to collapse the church and the support structures toward Warren would be given up basically.

People would give him up if they – They invited a lady that was providing care for my children to be a part of that counsel and she had been excommunicated I guess or sent away to repent or somethin, it was part of the early separations. She came and asked me if I would help her get in contact with the bishop because she wanted to go to this meeting, but she didn't want to go without blessings of the priesthood. Her name was Francine Copland. I finally found a time and a place to catch up with Uncle William who was the bishop at the time, William T. Jessup. He, a little bit annoyed I guess in a sense of 'why do I care?' He just basically

said, “Well, you’re a Priesthood holder, aren’t you?” I said “Well, yeah, of course, I’m an Elder.” He was like “Well, then why don’t you deal with her?” Fixed that problem right there. So I felt like it was my Priesthood calling to go to the Safety Net with her on that first meeting.

During those meetings, they were all day meetings, we would break for lunch in the middle. The morning session was so toxic and combative and hostile. I’ve never seen anybody treated so badly as they treated her. We broke for lunch and her and I had lunch together and she just says “I don’t know if I can even go back to that.” I just told her, I said “I don’t dare not go back. I think we better go back. I’ll go with ya, but I don’t think we dare not go back. We need to know what’s goin on.” Because we had the courage to come back, then I guess that was the real test on whether or not we were trustworthy or something. At the end of the meeting I was just a fly on the wall, or just sitting on the periphery. They invited me to come back. Francine never went back to another of the meetings.

But when I came back to the bishop I said “Oh my gosh. This is what’s goin on.” He was like “Well, if they invited you back then go. We need to know what’s goin on.” So I felt like I was doin my duty. At least for a couple meetings, then it was just like ‘we don’t care. Don’t report this to us.’ I made one or two written accounts, y’know paper reports and the messages came back said “We don’t care. Don’t send that stuff to us, we don’t care.” I said “Well then, if that’s the case can I quit goin?” They’re like “No. Be about your duty.” So then I’m one of them, when I’m in the meetings, when I’m out of the meeting I can’t be trusted around anything important because he’s corrupt, he’s meeting with the enemy.

So I found myself a little bit of a man without a country. I spent about fifteen years doing that. After the first couple meetings of Safety Net, I was working as a paramedic in Springdale and the Springdale Police Chief invited me to come to a meeting that was a Law Enforcement Association meeting. When I walked in the County Attorney recognized me from Safety Net and he’s like “Oh yeah, well if you come to these.” And so for quite a number of years I was attending, one week I’d go to Safety Net and two weeks later I’d go to Law Enforcement Association. To those that attended those meetings, I was under the exquisite directive of pressures saying you don’t get to represent the church, you can’t represent the fire department, the police department, the dispatch, the cities, you don’t represent a soul. You don’t represent anybody. In those meetings, every meeting you’d go around the table and introduce yourself and it was so-and-so with this organization, so-and-so with this and they’d come to me and I’d just say “I’m Lawrence the Barlow” It kinda got to be the joke among people that knew what was goin on. “Are you Lawrence The Barlow?” “Yeah that’s me.” [Laughter]

SG: So during Safety Net and the Law Enforcement meetings you were still an active member of the FLDS church. Can you briefly describe what Safety Net is for those that don’t know?

LB: I attended those meeting until the day I was separated from my family, or sent away from the culture. They didn’t know what happened, I just quit comin, kind of a thing. Safety Net was an organization started by Utah Attorney General Marc

Shurtleff's office and Tom Horn from Arizona, and it was that aggregation of services. Its primary purpose was to "Capture Warren". That's when he was on the most wanted and was runnin from prosecution. Then they realized that they needed to separate the law enforcement component of it and keep doin what they were doin, pursuing but then they turned and marshalled all of the social services basically as a, literally a safety net. When they took the head off the snake then all these barefoot and pregnant women would come runnin out and they'd be ready to catch and rescue 'em all. Which was insulting to sit there and listen to. They were pretty convinced by that.

I will say this in hindsight now. I fiercely defended my culture. I was on the receiving end of a lot of wrath a lot of times. I was faithful in defending the culture. After I hit the brick wall and left the culture. It was about a year after that where it finally started to break down and I started to seek the truth of what really was and woke up to the facts of what really is. It was a lot of crow, it was a lot of egg on the face

When I woke up to those truths, that these were the facts of what was goin in, I went back to most every one of those major players and just begged their forgiveness. I said "this is not anything I ever would defend. This is not somethin I, it's not our culture. I don't know where this is comin from. This is not what I was defending." Almost every one of 'em said in their own way "we already knew that. We knew who you were the second meeting you walked in. We knew that you were here on an assignment and we knew that you were a good-hearted and who you were. We were willing to make space for that." That was pretty humbling.

SG: I know that you did an episode of Year of Polygamy with Lindsey Hanson Park. Where you did go into quite a bit of the circumstances under which you left or were sent away initially from the religion and the culture. If you wouldn't mind giving a brief summary of that. Listeners can also go look for that episode that you did where you go into further detail. And then maybe talk about more recent parts of your life now that you've been away from the religion, but back in the community.

LB: In the run up to 2012, there was a lot of tension and pressure and things. There was a kind of a drop dead day given that by December 31st of 2011 you had to be a part of the United Order or you were automatically made nonmember and excluded from whatever it was. So we were goin through these processes of worthiness interviews and all this type of thing. I had my worthiness interview in I believe it was November the 28th of 2011 and I was judged not worthy to be a member. So I was declared nonmember and made a special caretaker, was the class they gave me. Uniquely enough I was sent back to be a caretaker over my own family. Which normally wouldn't happen.

I spent almost a year as a caretaker with my own family. That just meant as a nonmember my family couldn't live off the storehouse. They were dependent upon me to provide for 'em. Yet I couldn't eat at the same table with 'em. I couldn't attend the meetings with 'em. I couldn't – it was just a pressure cooker.

In October of 2012, I received a phone call from a newly appointed bishop which was a short appointment. He read to me a revelation supposedly that came from the Lord that declared that I was guilty of everything unforgiveable from murder to adultery to denying the Christ and trader to the Brethren and basically anything that's unforgiveable was all packed in that. After much prodding for me to accept or to acknowledge this was true or was coming of the Lord, then I basically said "I don't know how this can be true I don't recognize anything in it." But Intuitively I knew if I said "nah, that's a bunch of bunk." Who am I accusing? Am I accusing the Lord? Am I accusing the Prophet? Am I accusing the Bishop? 'Cause any of that was a worse sin than whatever this was apparently.

So I just simply, finally, said "Well, if the Lord says it's so, I don't know how it can be, but I guess we'd better go figure out what's goin on." He just says "Ok. With that, by the voice of your own confession you're now guilty of all these things." That's when I was told to go away. I wasn't sent to repent, I was sent to go away forever, never to return. And to have no further communication. I was honestly so hurt or confused or frustrated or angry and all of it bundled together.

They gave me a couple thousand dollars in cash and cobbled a vehicle together so that it'd work enough to get me gone. I intended to take what cash I had and draft to Siberia. [Laughter] I was gonna go away. I didn't care if they ever heard from me again. I got in an accident the next morning in Saint George on my way to the insurance office. It really jarred me as far as kinda rattled me out of my anger state to one of just pretty broken. Fortunately I had some friends that I dared call and they didn't disappoint. I was kept safe for a couple of weeks while I hit the bottom and started to bounce back. So that was quite a journey.

I'll abbreviate that to just say that in February 13 of 2014 my wife had a massive stroke and was on life support. And with all my background; legal and medical and everything, law enforcement, I understood I had a duty to her. I didn't really feel like I had leverage, like 'oh good I can make my move now'. I was scared to death, but out of respect to her, I knew that I had a duty to her. I came and I asserted my right. Her parents requested that I surrender my rights to them, but there's no way I would. I asked her, in a moment when she was conscious, if she knew where she was and whether she wanted me there or not. Truth be known at that time if she had said "I don't want you here" I would have been very careful to see her back on her feet. Then I probably would have left out of respect for her agency.

Fortunately that's not what happened. That's when we made a move. My oldest child was still seventeen at the time, seventeen and a half. I came home on my fortieth birthday, gathered up my daughters, and a month later, gathered up my sons.

When we brought my wife home from the hospital, she was paralyzed on the right, was wheelchair bound, had half her skull missing for about six months. We were basically just dumped in a trailer. It was not handicap accessible. It was basically mold infested. It was just, it was just really [inaudible]. They took from her anything of sentimental value, in other words just gave her beds and furniture.

There was no food, there was no toiletries, there was nothing. A friend of mine in Saint George came and saw the circumstance that we were in. Him and his wife left at 11 o'clock at night, drove back down to Walmart, spent a large piece of their savings, and showed back up at three, four o'clock in the morning with the back of his truck clear full of food and tissue and towels and soap and everything we needed to set our house up.

In 2015 was the flood. We had the big flood that took quite a number of lives. It brought a lot of State, National, and International attention. I conquered my fear enough to go back to the fire department and offered. I was duly qualified as far as all the technical training and was met with the rebuff of the shunning. Saying "We don't care about your qualifications, we don't want ya here." I recognized that they were in a lot of trouble. I pulled back from that and let 'em just work through whatever it was they were dealing with. It triggered something in me. And also [inaudible].

We kinda just made a commitment that day that if we're gonna be here, we're gonna step it up. We're not gonna just exist here, we're gonna be active. First opportunity to really get engaged came in February of 2016 when the Presidential elections were goin on. In 2015 Utah had passed a law that made Utah a primary contender state by doin what they called a caucus preference vote in, it wasn't a primary it was just the republican caucus vote in February. In order to do that every precinct had to be in order, Hildale neighborhood precinct, hill 97 was not in order, it was not active for four or five years. One thing led to another, I was asked to help on that. We did, you were there, you were part of that, thank you.

SG: I was there.

LB: That was a historic day. We called a neighborhood caucus and we saw 1100% increase in voter participation. That was a big deal. From there on I was nominated to be the chair of the Republican neighborhood caucus and was unanimously supported. It's been two years, I've been re-nominated and unanimously supported. In that, it kind of put me a position of influence. Shortly after that the Federal case was workin and the DOJ [Department of Justice] sought the public's input on how to resolve or deal with a guilty verdict.

So we put together the Short Creek Community Alliance. Which is something that myself and Terrell and Shirley and a few others had a hand in. We created a petition that was, we went down the guilty verdict and we took each matter and from a citizen perspective, this was our recommendation on how to resolve that, we weren't contending the guilty or not guilty, it was, we agreed with the guilty verdict and asked for some things.

SG: And that was the DOJ case against the marshals for civil rights infringements. Yes?

LB: Yes. But it was also the cities for discriminating against the water and different things too. So we advocated to protect and preserve our city governments in our Marshal's office where the DOJ's [were] ready to just disband and maybe even

add a corporate rate and just get rid of the mess and dump it back on the counties. We asked them to not do that. I wasn't there at the Federal Court, I saw the manner in which our petition was presented to the judge. But I understood it was presented to him. He found it unique that a group of citizens would proactively petition him on how to do his job. He actually took it under consideration and about six months later he issued his finding. Much to our delight he gave us everything we asked for plus a few things. Put some weight and teeth behind it. And it really opened some possibilities. The follow up from that was the elections. Almost immediately we started into a primary with the Hildale city's mayor and two council positions were up for election and then there was a vacancy that had the remainder of a two year term that was also in play. By doing that it would put us in a position of control of the city. We were pretty assertive in how we strategized that and we recognized that we had to unite the vote enough to match or break the block vote and we accomplished what we needed to. With that, the city government basically just walked out and we got an opportunity to recreate our city government. The remaining two city council positions, about six months into that, were declared vacant because they refused to participate. I was one of ten people that petitioned to be considered for an appointment to fill the vacancy of two of those and was selected and served on the Hildale City Council under appointment up until now. I just recently filed for election and there was not enough petitioners to warrant a primary so the primary is forfeited and we go directly to general election in November. There's four of us competing for three seats. We'll see where that goes. So that brings us to where we are.

SG: I have one final topic. You have talked a lot about the challenges and the maneuvering that you had to do to make sure that your sons were with you and safe and everything, what about your daughters? What was it like for them during all of your family's transition, and what are they doing now?

LB: My daughters were, they were very specifically targeted by the culture to try to pull them away from us. When they couldn't get my wife to agree to send me away again, they had my daughters and all my sons are special needs, so all they had to do was assign them to someone to take care of em. I communicated with my wife's grandfather, and he let me know that he was the caretaker of my children. And I explained to him that I knew that I couldn't deal with Markay, and my wife's condition, and deal with them right now, so I would trust him a little longer as the caretaker of my children and made it clear to him that it was my intention that I would call for them in time and they better come. So they knew that day was comin. It ended up bein about two months. And there was some pretty aggressive effort to brainwash or to break that commitment, they didn't quite dare push the limit. I was pretty forward with him and they knew I meant what I meant when I said, so they had the children where I needed em, when I needed them there. But they had given my daughters a special mission, and that mission was to help me get discouraged so that I would leave. It was their job to bring their sisters and their mother back to the priesthood. There was quite a bit

of turmoil. Some of the very people that were coaching them were law enforcement officers and former law enforcement officer's spouses and different things that knew how the law worked.

SG: But were loyal to the church?

LB: They were in the culture and they coached my daughters on how to bring distress. How to position the house to fail a child safety assessment by CPS [Child Protection Services]. Just little things like they went around and took the outlet cover off, they would put their food scraps in the fridge like it was the only food they had was garbage, they wouldn't do the dishes, so if I didn't do em they just piled up, the laundry just piled up in the hall so that it made it so mom couldn't get her wheel chair past, so she was quarantined to her end of the house, and there was a lot of time, carrying the whole load during the day and stayin up all night to try to put the house in order. The police officers were coaching them on how to create the duress and what they were needin was for me to get violent. They needed me to hit one of the children so that they could be justified in, that never happened. There was, on a Friday, got quite, I got pretty forward in my language in requiring them to do what was bein asked to help out. It kind of broke out into quite bit of a chaotic noise. They felt like that's what they needed, they finally had what they needed and, long story short, is I got arrested that evening on charges of domestic violence against a child and I was basically bailed out that night. I had an agreement that I wouldn't go back around the victims until my arraignment and I could be seen by the judge and I recognized it was an old law enforcement trick where if you arrest em after seven o'clock PM on Friday, then no judge will see em til Monday at one. So you get a free three day hold-out of the deal. That was their intention. They intended to relocate my family while I was locked up. They knew I didn't have any money to bail out, they knew I, they fully expected me to just be locked up. It didn't work out that way. I got bailed out thanks to some friends. I was given a place to stay and spent there til Monday. Monday we met with the County Attorney's. They were frustrated cause they couldn't get the reports from the officers and I was supposed to be arraigned and they didn't even have the charging document. I had a pro-bono attorney that stepped forward and filed some things in my behalf. Filed an intent to sue the city, requested a preservation of all these records, so the city instead of surrendering the documents for prosecutors, were keepin it and trying to get it all ready for a lawsuit. In the meantime, I was being independently investigated by the sheriff's office on behalf of the County Attorney. I just basically told them, I said "Look. On this charge, it's not possible to have a domestic violence against a child, it just isn't, they're not sixteen, married or eighteen and co-habiting. She's twelve, she's claiming I hit her, I didn't. These are wrongful charges and this is why they're there." Then I just basically went through with the statutes as you don't have anything. They immediately issued me a statement of saying they refused the charges pending further investigation. Hildale city was really hurt over that. Accused them of favoritism because of my involvement with LEA [Law Enforcement Agency] and Safety Net and so instead of just shuttin it down, they handed off to Iron County up in Cedar City and it took me a year to finally get em

to dismiss the charges which as soon as they read the report they were done. They just didn't bother to read the report for a year. [Inaudible] The girls were frustrated that that didn't work, but then they started to just surrender to the fact that maybe he's not as mean as they think he is and what he has told us wasn't exactly true. He still hasn't hurt us, and even with all of that I was kind to em. It started to turn that around. Six months later my oldest daughter turned eighteen.

She was gonna just sneak out and I said, "No, you wait until your eighteenth birthday, get up and leave during the light of day, go out the front door. Give everybody a hug, tell your mother you love her. If this is the last we ever see ya, this is gonna be, don't sneak out and let us wonder if your dead in a gutter somewhere." She accommodated that and left about six in the morning. She had packed her bags and gone. My wife asked me "What are we gonna do?" I said, "If it was me, I'd just go get a birthday cake and then have it decorated and have some things set up and when she shows up this evening, you just act like you've been expecting her all day and she just got to go spend her birthday with her friends. Who cares, I mean, don't make it a big deal." That evening she did, she walked back in the house, which was a sweet relief to see her come back in, and when she looked around and saw that we'd been expectin her and it was our intention ta treat her just like she was an adult and that's another day. She kind of put down the battle axe and started being a lot more supportive of the family. It was a change from how it was five years ago.

Today, my oldest daughter works in Salt Lake for a law firm, she's a paralegal. My daughters are well adjusted and attending public school. My second daughter's graduated high school and started college this fall. My third daughter right now is at a leadership conference for a week up in Central Utah with the local [inaudible]. She was part of the wrestling team. Took state championship and just lovin life. Free to be. I think the big fundamental change in their life was when they realized that I was done telling them what to think and I was gonna teach them how to think. That I was gonna to require them to be accountable for their own conduct. That was an uncertain place for them. It took them a little bit to get comfortable with that. Now they are very strong willed, independent, happy.

SG: What about your two youngest girls?

LB: The two younger girls, they're at home with me. They're attending school. The youngest one was just young enough during all the drama that she just shifted and adapted. My fifteen year old is going through fifteen year old stuff and she's steppin into adult hood quite amazingly. It's all good.

SG: Anything else you'd like to add before we wrap up?

LB: There's more to the story, how's that?

SG: Thanks Lawrence!

[END OF RECORDING]