

Kenneth Don Chapman's

Life History written in 2025

I was born June 26, 1976 the first child of Stephen Kenneth Chapman and Beverly Diane Parker Chapman. My parents were worried they were not going to be able to have children, because they had a couple of miscarriages during the four years of marriage before my birth. I was born with lots of dark hair and a low voice. My mom told me that the physician called me "EL Tigre" because my cry was so deep. I have always been blessed with a good recollection and memory of my past. My earliest memory is of being a small child, maybe one or two years old, playing with the water in the front yard and remember the water coming out of the spigot at a high pressure and beating me in the top of the foot which caused me some mild pain and is probably the reason I can remember the incident. I grew up at 1457 South 900 East Salt Lake City, Utah and lived here my whole life until I was married. My parents bought the house two years before I was born. it was a very small cottage and had a fairly decent size the yard when they bought it. My dad immediately went to work remodeling their house and it was under construction all of my life, going through different phases of renovation, until I was 17. On Saturdays many members of our ward would come over to assist in building the Chapman home. To name a few there was Wade Barnes, Ken Luker, Val Wilson, John Pruess, Carwin Smith(my mother's cousin), Glen Cahoon (who later became the stake President) and many others from the neighborhood and church. I enjoyed growing up on a "construction site", as it were and learned many things about construction and building. A lot of it was taught to me by my father and a fair amount was learned just by observation. Ultimately the, approximate 900 square foot, cottage was turned into a 3500 square foot home. When I was around nine or ten, my dad hired someone to dig a basement. They came in with a backhoe from the neighbor's yard and our backyard and dug a large basement. My dad set up all of the cement forms and footings and did the rebar himself. I remember spending time with him while he dug the footings and set up the forms. When they poured the concrete walls I remember that one of the cement forms broke out and they had to make a hasty repair in order to continue with the pouring of the concrete. My dad reused all of the wood from the cement forms to build the kitchen floor and other parts of the house. There was a small hand dug basement underneath the original house that my dad had enlarged when he first bought the house so he could put a furnace underneath the house to provide heat. I'm not sure what was there prior to this. I remember opening up the trapdoor to this small cellar like basement as a child and going down there with him. I remember there being plumbing issues with the main line and my grandpa Kenneth Arthur Chapman, coming over with the sewer snake to assist my dad in cleaning out the drain. I remember he teased me that the drain was going to send all this water shooting out and drowned us. I asked my dad if it was true, he told me grandpa was teasing. From that point on I always knew I could trust my father to tell me the truth, and he always did. Speaking of my grandfather he was always so loving and kind to his grandchildren whenever we would go visit you give us a bottle of soda pop and candy he was a quiet person but very sweet and gentle. After the large basement was completed we hand dug the small basement area out to a larger room. We also dug out, by hand, footings around the front part of the house, the old concrete was very crumbly and unstable, so we removed it in small sections and replaced it with new concrete so that the foundation would support a second and third story. This took several years to complete as it was done piecemeal on Saturdays. The kitchen and bathroom moved around in the house several different times during the various phases of construction. Eventually when I was 15 my parents decided enough was enough and they took out a loan for \$50,000 and hired my uncle David Parker to finish the house so they can have a nice place to raise a family. Prior to hiring my uncle, my dad had done all of the construction with friends and largely himself. He had poured the basement, built the first floor which

originally it was a dining room and access to the stairs to the second floor, a garage, a second story which was the master bedroom, two small bedrooms and what we call "the studio" which was a sun room. The roof on this section of the house was not completed before winter and so we had plastic sheeting collecting the water that was coming through the framing it was funneling into large plastic trash cans which we had to bail out with 5 gallon buckets during that winter. Because that section of the house took the place of the two bedrooms that were originally part of the cottage we had no bedrooms and all of us, which at that time was six children and my parents, slept in the living room on one large bed made up of all the other beds pushed together. Once we got the roof on the new section house we move into the bedrooms upstairs my parents had the master bedroom, of course, and the two small bedrooms were the boy's room and the girl's room. I think we lived in that situation for several years with only minor improvements going on. During that time there was no insulation or sheetrock on the walls or ceiling. The only heat we had during the winter was one temporary duct which had been configured to come up the stairway from the basement and of course space heaters. I didn't realize it at the time, but we were very poor and even though we were poor and we're still happy. For us boys', living in an unfinished house was fun. We could Jerry rig booby traps and contraptions to turn off the bed room light and no one cared. I think it was harder on the girls and specially my mom. She wanted nothing more than to live in a beautiful home. I remember getting large cardboard furniture boxes from the furniture store and stapling it over the studs so that she could apply wallpaper to the cardboard so that the house would look somewhat nice. During this period my parents bought a large supply of bricks my dad and intended to lay the brick, but my uncle and Ballard Pead was a professional mason and he volunteered his time to lay the brick. He came many Saturdays and sometimes brought his kids to help with the brick. I worked alongside him and really enjoyed learning about masonry he was very loving and kind and would patiently demonstrate the skill of brick laying. It was amazing to watch him cut bricks. He would heft a brick in his hand, and smack it with the edge of his masonry trowel and it would crack just exactly the way he wanted it to. I've tried it many times since he demonstrated that technique and have never succeeded. When my Uncle Dave began working on my parents' house I worked alongside him the entire time. I learned how to frame houses, pour concrete and do finish carpentry from him. We started on this phase of the house in the spring, by a tearing down the roof above the living room and what used to be the old kitchen. My dad was busy with his job and I think kind of burned out from construction and so he didn't do much during this phase except teach me that my brother Ben how to do plumbing and electrical work. I remember my dad teaching how to sweat copper pipes together and giving the instruction on the ABS plumbing drains I then proceeded to plumb the entire house, Ben do all of the wiring. It was fun and rewarding when the building inspector who was inspecting the plumbing asked who had done all the work, my dad pointed at me, the inspector was surprised and impressed. My brothers and sisters and mother insulated the house, during this insulating my mother who was nine months pregnant went into labor and gave birth to my brother David the next day. Instead of bringing the baby home to a house that was under construction she stayed with her sister Leahmary Parker Pead for several weeks while the sheetrock and painting and flooring were completed. I remember of a couple of my aunts and uncles coming over to help finish up the trim work in preparation for painting especially my Uncle Keith who crawled around and spackled all the nail holes in the baseboards and trim. My aunts wanted the house to look beautiful inside and out so they bought some sod for the front yard and I remember the neighbor Steve Shipp and others helping us to lay the sod. In order to get the house and finished it was difficult to live there. Part of the time we had no bathroom and we had to shower at the church there was a shower in the men's bathroom. My dad was in a branch presidency for the convalescent home, The Hillside Villa, during this time and had a key to the church so we would go over there late at night for showers. I remember having a big reveal when my mom came home and saw the house all finished also her mother and father saw the house for the first time, since this last phase of construction started. We were also happy and thrilled to have a real

house finally. I think because of all of this I really developed an affinity for building and construction. I worked for my Uncle Dave doing finish carpentry when I was 17 for about a year and helped my Uncle Kenny finish his basement and repaint his house. After that I got a job working for Ernst home and nursery and also worked at round table pizza for a few months before going on my mission.

Let me rewind to when I was younger... I remember always having a family garden and bottling fruit from our peach and apricot trees. We would go to the Barker family reunion each summer and they would always invite us to come by their cherry orchard they owned and pick cherries, we bottled them too. In fact one year we bottled so many cherries that we got tired of eating them and I think still to this day there are some 1988 cherries in my mother's food storage. We also bottled tomatoes and salsa and string beans. We relied on this food to feed our family. At one point the garden was over half of the back yard. When I was really little we had a dog that my parents had got I think before I was born and his name was Ticky. When I was five or six my dad found a stray dog that he brought home and we named her Betsy. I never really did like the dogs they were no easy and I was headed clean up their waste which I thought was disgusting. Betsy didn't live for very long and through a tragic accident Ticky died as well. He kept climbing over a fence and wiggling out of his collar and running off through the neighborhood, so my little brother Josh, who was probably 4 or 5 at the time, put the chain around and his neck instead of his collar. He did the same thing and jumped over the fence and tried to wiggle out but he got hung. After that we had some pet cats and my younger siblings had some hamsters and a Guinea pig. I never liked pets much and I never had any more pets. I love and respect animals but I don't feel that need to have a pet. Also when I was about this same age (eight or nine) my parents started Gingham Guys and Gals which was a performing group and we would practice song and dance numbers that my dad had choreographed and created. We performed our show for church socials and nursing homes and a couple of times at Lagoon amusement park. This was a creative opportunity for my siblings and other friends to come together and my dad to share his dancing and passion for providing entertainment. I was pretty shy and my dad try to get me to sing love songs and other things to get me out of my shell, but I did not want to do these things and so my dad decided to try having me learn to do magic tricks. My dad signed me and him up for a magic class and we went there together and I developed and repertoire of magic tricks to perform in the family performing group. I enjoyed magic and I especially enjoyed learning it with my father. He wanted all of his children to develop confidence and self-worth. When I was old enough to go to My mother took me to Emerson school was a morning class and an afternoon class. My mom and signed me up for the afternoon session the teacher was Mrs. Hiatt. She was very old and near retirement and I don't think she had the patience to deal with young children anymore. None of the kids liked her too much. I remember there being a bunch of percussion instruments in the classroom and all through the whole school year of all I wanted to do was to play the instruments. We never had a chance, probably because she couldn't stand the noise. Over all, of the public school experience was rather negative for me and the next year my mother decided to home school me and my brother Ben We did home school for the rest of our school years with the exception of a couple of years while my mother was pregnant with my brother Clarke and the year following her birth. Melody's birth was especially difficult for my mother and ultimately ended in a C-section. My mother and do a great job raising us, tending to our needs and educating us. She exposed us to a lot of good literature and helped us to pursue hobbies and vocational interests Whenn we were teenagers At this time my brother Ben and I were interested in various scientific projects like building a tesla coil and making pyrotechnics. I remember my mother taking us to a gun store to buy black powder so we could make fireworks and to Ernst to buy wire and pipe form the Tesla coil. we did this stuff when I was about 14. My brother Josh had a friend named Jaron Lindow and he gave us a Honda passport 70 which did not work. My brother Ben, Josh and I Jerry rigged it and would ride it up and down the alley. Also during this time we decided we wanted to make it go kart. we had the wood skills but no metal working skills or tools. we tried to make up something and eventually one of our

neighbors Steve Pruess helped us weld up old bicycle frames and pipes. Combining that with the wood parts that we had made, we had a functional go kart with three wheels, and tiller steering. We crashed it a few times and bent the front forks and folded a couple of wheels. Jim Wood also helped to weld the frame and make it stronger. My brother Ben still has this go kart. Steve Pruess told us it looked like an 1896 Bernardi. By the time I was high school age I had a paper route and I would ride my bicycle to the seminary which was by East high. My bicycle was a conjugation of several bicycles because I kept breaking my bicycles either through accidents or the fact the bikes were cheaply made. In the ninth grade I was in the pep band and played for the football games a couple of times. The next year Ben joined me at the high school and we signed up for metal shop which was super fun. The teacher was Mr. Theriot. He only had a few years left before his retirement and had seen a lot of students. It didn't take long however for Ben and me to get in good with him. By the time I was in my senior year my brothers Josh and Ben, who were taking shop, would hang out there for several hours and work alone on their projects, which was taboo, and he would let them. I think he retired that year and the metal shop at East high closed for good. I ran into Mr. Theriot two times after that, once while I was working in Ernst, and another time when I went to a model train park. He was there with his 10th scale Train. He loved metal and small engine work and instilled that love in me. It was back in high school when I decided that one day I would have my own metal lathe and milling machine. When I was in high school a family moved into our ward, Joyce and George South. They had sons my age and I became friends with them (Jeremy and Jason). After my mission I did a lot of remodeling on their house. Her father, Martel Pederson, was a machinist and made injection molded parts for people. He had an old lathe and I worked for Joyce and him to buy it in trade for \$1000. He got it from West high school when they closed their metal shop. I got my milling machine shortly after I was married for \$1500. My best friend and growing up was Adam Luker. He came over frequently and really became a family friend and an adopted brother in a sense. He was good friends with Ben too. When we were young, I went over to his house to play him he would come over to our house. We did not have a computer, but he did. I was fascinated with PC paint and other programs and I would play around on his computer which I think he found annoying. One time I created a treasure hunt for him on his birthday and I made this little wooden treasure chest with his present in it that I hid on the roof outside of his bedroom window. The Luker's house was an old mansion style house and had beautiful Tiffany light fixtures and pretty fireplaces. I have always loved the look of their house, Ken Luker, Adam's father did a lot of repairs and renovation of his own house, at the same time he was helping us with ours. The Lukers were in our ward and my parents became friends with them. They were in Amway together. The way I became friends with Adam was I went over to play with Andrew Luker (Adam's older brother), who is a year older than me, and he was grounded. So Linda, Adam's mother said I could play with Adam instead (who is younger than me). After that I became friends with Adam and never played with Andrew again. I guess I will shift gears a little bit in this history and talk about my mission. I was called to serve in the Australia Melbourne mission in the tail end of 1995 and left to November in which the MTC Provo Utah for three weeks. I arrived in Australia shortly before Christmas and was one week in downtown Melbourne and then I was transferred to Tasmania to Hobart where I served for four months my companion was elder Tranmer. I was real homesick the first nine and 10 months of my mission and eventually got used to be a missionary I was able to participate in the baptisms of several people recover the name of David and I don't remember his last name at the moment he became inactive before I left the area and I was hoped he would become active again. We had a second baptism while in Tasmania, Michael Besilio Espinosa. He was a Filipino kid who was really solid and I have high hopes he stayed active and faithful. Later on my mission I served in a city called Ballarat. While I was there we have another baptism of a guy named David Wilson, His girlfriend was a member and I think that is largely why he got baptized. He fell into inactivity when they broke up. After that I was transferred to a city called Frankston where my companion was elder Hawley from Provo Utah. He was a good missionary and seemed very faithful and

patient with me be baptized Tricia and Clint Handley, a mother and her son. They were really faithful and I'm pretty confident they stay active in church, especially Tricia. All of this occurred in the first year of my mission. About this time, I met with the church psychologist for a few months to help me cope with my emotional stresses and frustration with being a missionary, and being so far away from home. I began to learn to cope with my feelings but I struggled with being "full on" as a missionary. I knew I needed to persevere because I was setting an example for my siblings and future children. At that time I was not aware of alternatives like service missions and other things like that and they weren't as acceptable in the eyes of society as they are nowadays. I didn't have any more baptisms I did a lot of service and tried to set a good example to other people and serve people in other ways. I feel like the perseverance I exhibited was a good developmental thing for me and it has helped me to press forward during other hard challenges throughout my life since then. I really feel like perseverance is a noble trait and quality and it has most definitely been a theme in my life. I'm always very moved by stories and speeches about the topic. When I came home for my mission I remember speaking about missions as something that was very hard but very worthwhile. I really do feel like serving as a missionary set a pattern of obedience, sacrifice and faithfulness in my life and I'm so glad that I went. Being a fun loving and jovial person I thought it would be hilarious if, when I came home for my mission, wore a disguise as I came off the plane. And back then people could meet you at the gates when boarding or departing on an airplane. I knew my family intended to meet me as I came off the plane and so I purchased a cheap wig and removed part of the hair to make a goatee and mustache which I glued to my face with rubber cement. The problem was I waited to the last second to put on my disguise after the plane in ordeal ended so by the time I had my disguise on everybody else had left the plane and I was 5 minutes behind the second to the last person getting off. It was still fun and set a precedent for my brothers to do something similar, with their own little twist, as they came home from their missions. Ever since I was a young teenager I had dreamed of being able to get married, and start my own family. I truly have loved children ever since I was an infant and wanted to have my own family. Now that my mission was over I was ready and the time was right to get married. I dated lots of young ladies after my mission, but I never met anyone who was willing to marry me, although I proposed to several. Looking back on it, I'm glad they all said no. I learned a lot from these dating experiences I was so desperate to get married that I was overlooking many compatibility issues with the various girls I dated. After three years of dating and in desperation, I decided I would just date girls I knew I wouldn't marry and just have some social connections. About this time, I was dating a girl by the name of Denise and she was several years younger than me. I took her to Lagoon and we had a nice time, but she was acting a bit awkward with me because she was interested in a more lustful relationship than I was. On the way home, she sat on the far passenger side of the car leaning against the door, pretending like she was asleep. I was pondering about the course of my life and realizing that she and I need to break up. Suddenly, I had a very interesting spiritual experience. It was almost as if I was having a conversation in my head with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost said, "She's the last one." I said, "The last one what?" The Holy Ghost said, "She is the last person you will date before you meet your wife." This hit me like a ton of bricks. For years I had been praying that I could find my wife, that I could just know her name or have some sign that she was out there. I even prayed for her safety and well-being, even though I didn't know who she was. As I sat there and pondered about this statement, that I was going to meet my wife very soon, I questioned in my mind, "Then why all of these others, why have I dated so many different women and had so much heartache because of the breakups, the last three years?" Then the floodgates of revelation opened, and the Holy Ghost spoke to me, "You needed to be invested in these relationships for the sake of the ladies you dated, it was part of your mission. I sent you to these young women to help them, to show them that they can be loved, that there are good men out there who will respect them, and for you to try to bring them closer to their Savior. But now you're done, the mission is over. It's time for you to move on to the next phase of life." I drove the rest of the way home in silence trying not to let my tears

show. I was deeply affected by this experience and thought that I'd better move cautiously as I considered whom to date because maybe this experience was true, and I really was going to meet my wife soon. I was invited by Liz Grandlinger, who was the director, to become involved in a stake play, *Within these Walls*, not as an actor but as the stage manager. Work was slow at the time and it sounded like a fun thing to do so I accepted the offer. I helped to build the set and paint and went to practices. There was a small bit part that they couldn't find anyone to do which included of short solo singing "remember all your dreams", Liz asked me if I would be willing to do it and I said yes. There were some young adults from the stake singles ward that were in the play along with lots of adults and children. It was a large cast, my mom little brothers were in the show as well. This scene where I was to sing the song had one young lady from the singles ward in it named Wendy Caldwell. She was very attractive and had a charming personality, flirted with all the boys and always dressed in business casual and seemed kind of well off. I was trying to stay aloof because I wasn't sure who this girl that I was going to meet and be my wife. I kept telling myself that Wendy was in a different league than I was, and if she ever realized what a bumpkin I was, she definitely would not be interested in me. She spoke to me first before I ever talked to her and introduced herself and was very sweet. Normally, I was the first to speak to girls back then and I was not shy. So this was kind of the opposite of the way things typically were for me. I was immediately taken in by her, a pattern that was all too common in my life, because I was so desperate for love and affection, but I played it cool. We would visit during practices but I would always leave early before she got her solo which bummed her out because she wanted me to hear her sing. I knew if I heard her sing I would be that much more infatuated with her. I believe she asked me one time to stay and listen to her solo, which I did. She was the love interest in that scene along with a guy by the name of Don Delmar. As the play practices progressed, and I got to know Wendy, I kind of forgot about my spiritual experience and I let my guard down. I started to be my usual flirtatious self and one day I had a Hershey chocolate "hug" and I came up to Wendy and said, "Can I give you a kiss?" She knew I meant a chocolate, but she said, "Sure!" She closed her eyes and puckered up, to be flirtatious back. Without thinking, I quickly gave her a real kiss and I was shocked that I had the guts to do it, so was she. I then gave her the chocolate. She told me not to let Don know that I kissed her because he had major crush on her and was a really bad actor and she was trying to get him to do a good act in the play by leading him on in real life. That was the end of it for me, I was so in love! I remember coming home after that practice and my mom saying, "What happened to you?!" she could tell I was on cloud nine. I told her the story and she laughed. After that Wendy and I went on a couple of dates but I was still getting mixed signals from her and I wasn't sure if she really liked me or not. By September I was desperate to know how Wendy felt. I knew that the play was going to be over soon and it would be harder to date Wendy when we didn't have the play practices to bring us together. One night after dress rehearsal, a big group of the single adults decided to go out for some late dinner, I was invited to go, but I did not because I was feeling melancholy wondering where I stood with Wendy. I said that the church was wondering what to do finally I decided to take some masking tape and write "I love you Wendy" on the window of her car, which she had left there because she rode with others to go out for dinner. The way I figured it, she'd either be embarrassed and leave, or she would come in and want to talk about it with me. Looking back, it seems like a foolish and risky thing to do but it ended up working out. She came in to the church and ask me if I had written it and also why. We talked. She wasn't sure how she felt about me. She liked me, but she didn't feel like she could say that she loved me that night. The first performance was the next day and I remember getting there early to set things up and make sure everything was ready to go. When Wendy got there, she made a beeline for me, but I was in the middle of preparations for the play and talking with a bunch of other people but she kept trying to find a moment alone with me. Finally she found a chance and she pulled me close and whispered in my ear that she loved me as well. After the play we continued to date and we became engaged on October 18th. It wasn't until many months later than I thought back on that spiritual experience I had while driving

home from Lagoon and realized the Holy Ghost had given me a clear definite answer to that question I had wondered about, "Who was I going to marry?".

Reminiscing about the past

(taken from audio recordings of stories told to Melissa and her children)

So this is a story about when in 1983, I believe, is the year that it happened. So we had a very wet spring, and there had been a very wet winter. So during the winter, it snowed a lot, there was lots of snow in the mountains in Utah and Salt Lake and there was a good snowpack. There was also a lot of rain in the spring. And then it warmed up really rapidly. And all of the snow in the mountains melted really quick within a couple of weeks. Do you know what happens when all the snow melts in a really short period of time? A flood, a big flood. And there was so much water coming out of the mountains and Salt Lake down into the valley that it started to flood the whole city. And there was certain streets that instead of being roads that you could drive on, they became rivers. So they turned fourth south into a river. And there was people that were being silly, and they were fishing in this "river", which was a torrent. And it was kind of silly and not really that they were going to catch fish. But they built temporary overpasses. So if you were driving through town, and you wanted to get to the other side of fourth south, you had to drive over this little bridge. I don't know how they made those, but I remember them. I remember driving over this weird bridge thing, and there was this big old sandbagged river. So they made all these sandbags. And this is when I was in Cub Scouts. People volunteered and made all these sandbags. And then built these rivers on the street with sandbags. And the water was just torrents, like big crazy rivers, like rapid rivers, going down roads. So there's all this water just pouring out of the hills, out of the mountains. And there's mud everywhere. And there's flooding everywhere, all throughout the city.

It just so happens that on ninth east, where grandma Bev's house was, a few doors down from grandma's old house there on ninth east, there's an underground river. And it runs under the driveways of peoples houses. It's underneath... It was the Cahoon's house when I was a kid(1479 S 900 East)... It's under their driveway. And it's a big old rectangular culvert that runs underneath their driveway. And it runs from up in the hills somewhere, it's a storm drain. It gets into that pipe and it stays under that pipe. Well, that pipe was so full of water, and there's a drain in ninth east that normally drains into it but it was bubbling up. And it was just flying out of the ground from that river. Anyway, but that point is a low spot. And you don't really realize it, but along ninth east and along Lincoln street, which is the next street back behind ninth east, there's a low spot right there too. And so the water's coming down so much that Lincoln street was full of water. And it was like a lake. And the houses are banked up on the west side of the street and on the east side of the street, it was this pond. And so the whole street, between Browning Ave and Kensington Ave, you couldn't drive down Lincoln street because it was a lake. So the they sand bagged a waterway there and they were draining it off on the top surface of that driveway, because it's the low point. They cut a channel through somebody's yard (1486 S Lincoln St) and then down that driveway. And they sandbagged the alley. But those people that lived on that street couldn't park on the street. And they had to walk through people's yards and go weird ways to get to their houses. And they had sandbags to keep water from going to their houses. There are some of the houses that were close by that low spot that had sandbags, at least two sandbags high. So about a foot tall. They were made out of sandbags to keep the water from going into their houses. And so they're right along their front doors and everything. And there's all this water pouring through there to drain off this lake.

So there was this girl that lived in the neighborhood. And she and I were friends. She was a little bit older than me. And her name was Christy. And she had a younger sister whose name is Shelly. And Christy and Shelly, I don't know what their last names were, they lived on Lincoln Street. And so one day after the flood had kind of started to subside... of course, when water's coming down a mountain, what

comes with it? Mud. Lots of mud. So there was basically a big old pond of mud left because the water was pretty much drained out. And it was slow enough, the water was still flowing, but it was slow enough that you could get in the water and walk around. So we would put on our swimsuits and we'd play in this water and stuff. So then she and I went up onto the street(Lincoln). And the mud was about eight or 10 inches deep. So we went through the mud and we decided to have a mud fight. So we were grabbing up handfuls of mud and hucking it at each other and covered each other with mud. It was so much fun. We were scooping up mud and hucking handfuls of sticky, gloppy mud at each other. And we were both like mud children, just covered. Totally, totally covered with mud. And I was, I don't know, how old was I in 1983? Well, you were only seven. Yeah, yeah, that sounds right. So I was a seven-year-old covered in mud. Like Charlie. Yeah, Charlie's age. Yeah, so I was Charlie's age. And I was playing in all this mud and hucking mud at this girl. And she had long hair and it was just like caked into her hair. We were just totally covered. Like you could see our eyes and that was all. We just got it on our faces, on our heads, on our backs. (laughing) We were soaked in mud. And it was sticky mud. So we were like heavy with mud. And then I... (laughing) So we had this mud fight. (Melissa; Where was Ben?) He didn't want to get dirty. Yeah, he wasn't ever apt to get dirty... I thought it was fun. So then after that, she's like, I can't go home. My mom will be so mad if I come in the house like this. I'm like, well, you can come on our house and shower off if you want, I guess... I don't know. And so then I went home and she followed me. And then my mom's like, good grief, you're not coming in the house, and she's not showering here. "So, well, how are we supposed to get cleaned up?", I asked. And so mom... I think mom told us to use the hose to clean off. So I think we washed off with the garden hose out in the yard or something. And then she went home not so dirty, and took a shower and stuff.

The story of the Coachman's behavior, where that originated, and the story of the restaurant in Las Vegas.

So the Las Vegas one's not that interesting. For whatever reason, we decided to go on a family vacation to Las Vegas. At the time, in all fairness, Las Vegas was really working hard to try to appeal to the family element. They were advertising heavily, saying this is a family-friendly community, it's family-friendly to come to these casinos, ya-da-ya-da-ya-da. And so a lot of their entertainment was G-rated, geared toward family-friendly stuff. So we're like, okay. So we went down there, they were offering special deals on hotel stays and all this stuff, trying to get families to come to Las Vegas. They had the Excalibur, the Pirates thing at Treasure Island, Circus Circus etc. They had these shows that were these kind of fun theatrical production things that they would run every hour in front of these casino hotels that were kind of fun. Their buffets were 99 cents a person. Can you believe that? 99 cents a person. For the breakfast buffet, that was the one we went to, the breakfast started at midnight, and at midnight you could go and get a 99 cent breakfast. And so my dad's like, we're going to stay up till midnight and we're going to go get breakfast! This is going to be awesome. (laughter) And we're like, dead. We're all kind of just, you know, we've had a long day looking at these shows. We're all beat and tired, we're trying to find lodging, and we finally got some real cheap hotel. (Melissa; Cockroaches on the floor.) Was there cockroaches? I don't think there was cockroaches. I ended up sleeping on the floor, so I hope there wasn't. But I think it was the Motel 6 or something, and it was kind of a cheap hotel. But before that, we went to get some food, and we were all kind of tired and half asleep. And we go to this buffet, this breakfast buffet, and we're ordering food, Seems like you had to order the food... So maybe it was that you could order whatever you wanted and they give it to you for a buck. So then the waiter's like, would you guys like juice? Sure! After we ate and got the bill, \$4 a cup for the juice! And dad was so mad. Yeah, he had to pay it. (laughter)He got the bill, and dad was like, what now, what now? Because he got taken. He thought he was going to save all this money. You know, he's looking at six kids, the buck a piece, that's not bad... but then he got scammed, because he got four bucks for every

kid's cup of juice. And he was so ticked. Yeah, that's expensive today. Because back then, it was like highway robbery to pay \$4 for a cup of juice. I'm pretty sure it was four bucks. That's what I remember. I'd have to get like a gallon and a half of orange juice to pay \$4 for it. Yeah. Totally squeezed.

(Beverly; Well, they're like, oh, your kids are so well-behaved. Yeah, they did. They kept telling us, oh, your kids are so well-behaved. Because we had so many of them.)

We're like, bro, do you know what time it is?

It's 1:30 in the morning. Of course we're well-behaved. They're half asleep. It was ridiculous.(laughter)

So that's the story of the 99 cent breakfast, this should be the lesson, If someone's selling something for dirt cheap, there's a gimmick. There's a trick. You got to figure out what the trick is before you get tricked. It's like buying a \$98 printer and then the ink is real expensive. Yeah, exactly.

The coachman story is a little different.

So we went to a family performance and we did, it was during the holiday season, I believe. As I recollect, we were wearing kind of the plaid costumes or something. (Beverly; No, the plaid costumes was at the end of the 90s.) Okay, well, I don't remember. We were wearing something nice. We were wearing costumes. (Melissa; Because we were going to go there?) No, it was after a performance and we were all dressed up. But dad didn't want... dad was frustrated and tired of all the hullabaloo of kids because he had six or seven kids at the time. I don't remember if Clarke was born yet. So maybe six of us or seven or eight, I don't know. But anyway, so he's like, we're going to go in this really nice restaurant, Okay? We're going to go to this really nice restaurant and you guys have to be in your best behavior. I want you boys to get the chairs for your sisters and so on, and just be ladies and gentlemen, Okay? Or we'll leave, and we aren't going to eat there if that happens... And so he gave us this, he primed us for this. So we're like, oh, okay! We're going out to eat? Dang! All right. We'll do whatever you say. We didn't go out to eat very often. And it wasn't a buffet either. It was like a "dine and order your meal" restaurant. So we're like, this is a real restaurant. We had only ate out at buffets usually if we did dine out. So this was rare. So we go in there and we're just like acting like real ladies and gentlemen. We did get the chairs for our sisters and we all sat there really polite and just like acting like aristocrats or something. And the waitress lady is like, my goodness, I have never seen such wonderful behavior in children. This is so great. And we're like, thank you. Thank you. (waving my hand aloft and using a British accent) I'm just being all silly, we didn't do that, but that was kind of the attitude. It was funny. So we we're good and we got this dinner and we were all stoked about it. So then after that, we always thought that Coachman's was this really nice restaurant. It's kind of just like a meh kind of, I mean, it was good food, but it's kind of a shady looking place. It was like Dee's. But it was a little worse than Dee's in some ways. It may have been, but the funny thing about Coachman's is that you had to pay with cash or check. They didn't accept credit cards or debit cards or anything. You had to pay with cash. The whole time they were in business, it was cash or check. (Beverly; Well, Carwin (Carwin Smith, My moms cousin) was the one that first told us about Coachman's. He said they had really good bread and veal cutlet.)

Oh, really?

Yeah.

Huh.

Well, yeah, it was good. They always had good food. They had this little mushroom sauce they put over their steaks. That's when I first had a good ribeye steak. And I remember when I started going there as a teenager, it was \$8.95 for the dinner meal deal. And the meal deal included soup AND salad. A steak with mashed potatoes, a side vegetable, a nice roll and dessert for \$8.95 or \$8.25 or something. So it was under \$9 for that whole meal of that many things. It was like a three-course dinner for that price. The price didn't ever really go up much. And the soup was really good. It was all really good. Yeah. Really good quality. In fact, I don't know that any other place really has food that's any better than that food

ever was. I've never really had a steak that was substantially better than that unless I cooked it. I've never been like, wow, this is better than Coachman's. It was always really good food. It was a good price. They were Greek people that owned it. Greek people are good cooks. So that's the story. So after that, Coachman's dinner, that was the code word Dad would use. "You guys be on Coachman's behavior." we'd all shape up real fast and like, yes, we're all aristocrats. He'd say, OK, I want you guys to go on Coachman's behavior or something like that. (Beverly; Dad learned some nice things that are different, I think, from the way he was brought up. But he always talked about because of the ballet and the associations that that provided in his life that he saw better, you know, better manners, appropriate social behavior.)

Yeah. because I think that his family was kind of a little more redneck than he was and he wasn't that like that.

Mom and Kenny talking about 9th East

Back in my day, that basement on the 9th East house was dug when I was six or seven. Melissa: "It must have been dug when I was like a year old, so it would have been '82, yeah." So it's about the same time as that '90s flooding. But that basement never flooded during that time. Mom: "I can tell you about other rains where we had to go because either something broke or you have it yet, but there's at least once in the middle of the night where Daddy and I had to run down there to the second patio and carry five-gallon buckets up those steps and dump them, yeah, because it was coming off the roof."

Kenny: "Yeah, I remember that. I remember hauling buckets out of that sunken patio. That sunken patio deal was always kind of a cool idea. It was. The whole concept was to get natural light into the basement—that's the only reason, Dad—and it also gave you an egress, a way out, an exit. You needed an exit from the basement, so it was more like a window, is what Dad called it for the sake of complying with building code.

After a lot of hand bucketing and stupid stuff, we decided to put in a sump pump. When they cast the concrete, Dad made a sump there to receive the water. There were times when the pump would fail, or when the pump burned out, or the pipe got plugged up with leaves and a bunch of crap. When I was in metal shop, incidentally, I took the grate off that he had gotten, took it to the school, and welded a flat thingy over the top of it so water could get in but crap wouldn't. That fixed the problem so it stopped getting garbage down there. That got rid of a lot of the problem, because the grate could let water in on the sides but garbage wouldn't get down all the time.

Then I thought, well, you know what? We got this sump—we could just hack into the pipe at the top here, and on that terrace I could make a nice water feature. And so I did. I built that when I was like 16 or 17. I built a water feature. Yeah, I got it all working, and it was working, but then somebody poo-pooed it or something, and they wanted to shut it off because it was too expensive to run the pump or some dumb thing. But it was totally operational. There were these little ponds, and it would run from pond to pond, down the wall, down the rock, and all this stuff.

I went and picked up a bunch of rock from a quarry up in Kaysville by the Barkers' house, brought all that red stone rock, and made this little water feature. I thought it was cool, and I got it all completed, but then everyone wanted to shut it off. I don't understand that. I always thought it was cool. It seemed like we shut it off while it was perfectly working, and I think there were some kinds of issues where it was losing water or something.

So I got a big flagstone, and there were valves so you could divert it. You could pump it out and get rid of the water, or you could turn off a valve and turn on another valve and it would put it into the fountain thingy. It would go down the fountain. So I added this diversion for the water feature, and I thought it was cool. I thought it was cool, for the record.

Did you ever lift up that big rock and see the valves? It's cool, huh? You're like, "This is an interesting rock. What is this?" It's like the Joseph Smith golden plates rock. That was cool. I wonder if the people that live there now even know that's there. Did it get ripped out? They're going to move that rock and go, "Hey, there's some valves down here. What's this?"

After the flood, I tried to make a retaining wall to hold water out of there in case it ever happened again. The other thing we didn't say is that each house on the side of us was six inches higher than our yard. So all that runoff came from the alley, and we were the low spot. You know why? I think they used to flood irrigate your guys' yard. It's got that concrete wall on the side, you know where the fences are. There's a concrete wall. We got extra because our yard was lower than theirs.

I remember that water feature, Kenny, and I think if we didn't do it, there was something about maintenance. Maybe it needed maintenance, like some junk guard or something. No one else was that much into it, but that's all right. I don't care. It was mostly for me. What's the fun of making it? It's like kids—they like to build the project, not necessarily function it later on.

But then tell Joseph how the water got all the way up into the raspberry patch. So yeah, when I was a kid, that pump—Dad put that pump in initially—and it was pumping up into the backyard. There was a big pipe buried underneath the terrace. When he built the terrace with the railroad ties, he put the pipe in first, because when the basement was dug it was just this long dirt slope.

He got all the railroad ties and had a chainsaw—an electric chainsaw—and sawed them up, then spiked them together with big long spikes and built that terrace. There was a pipe underneath them that would pump the water up into the backyard by the base of the pear tree. But the problem was that when there was water coming down, you'd pump so much water up there and it would just roll back down the hill and into the hole again.

So we dug a trench. I don't remember exactly when, but it was pretty soon. The sidewalk around the house must have already been in, so we dug a trench along in the dirt. I think Ben and I dug that trench mostly by hand. It was about a foot and a half deep. We dug all the way along and underneath the grapevine up to the front. By that point, Ben and I were done. Dad wanted it to go down the middle of the yard. It goes up to the top of the hill, then along the pear tree to the back, from the pear tree over to the grapevine, along the sidewalk on the back of the house.

There's a sidewalk going down the side of the house to the grapevine. It turns an elbow and then goes underneath the grapevine up to where the raspberries were in front of the garage. There's a little pipe coming up out of the ground. You didn't know that was connected to the sump pump? Yeah, that's the sump pump pipe. All those years you lived there and you didn't know.

Someone's going to come along and be like, "What's this pipe?" and cover it up. Someone probably will. There's all this mud over here. I was thinking of the raspberries behind the house, but that's right, they're on the side now.

Did we put that sidewalk behind the garage? Well, of course you did—who else would have? I'm just saying, was there a sidewalk there when there was no garage? The car wouldn't put that sidewalk in. Leo helped with the garage. Inside it's like ten feet, nine and a half feet from floor to ceiling. It's a little tall.

There's a lot of saga about that. I was telling Melissa how much time Daddy spent figuring out the spiral stairway, the mathematics of that. He worked on that for a long time. That was the dumbest thing to spend your time on. It wasn't that mathematical. He over-engineered things—not making them stronger than they needed to be, but spending too much time on the engineering. He over-analyzed it.

A recitation about the world's first KFC

So the world's first Kentucky Fried Chicken is in Salt Lake City. Now, do you guys know that there are Kentucky Fried Chickens all around the world? Like, all around the world—in other foreign countries and everything. In Japan, in China, in England. They fry them up after they've been cold and they re-fry them. There is re-fried chicken? Is it re-fried beans? In Mexico they re-fry the beans. In Japan they re-fry the chicken.

Anyway, so the world's first Kentucky Fried Chicken is—so Colonel Sanders, Harlan Sanders, was actually an actual colonel in the Army. And my mission president was the CFO for Kentucky Fried Chicken, and he personally knew Colonel Sanders. So some of what I'm going to tell you is directly from the mouth of my mission president, who was good friends with Colonel Harlan Sanders.

And he told me that in the early days of Kentucky Fried Chicken, the way it started was as follows. And this story is directly from my mission president. He told it to me as best as I can recollect. He said that Colonel Sanders, or Harlan Sanders as he went by, was an entrepreneur, but he was in the military and he swore really bad. He had a dirty mouth.

So he wanted to start up a restaurant, and he had a good chicken recipe that he thought was great, that he had worked on and worked on and developed—this fried chicken recipe. And he wanted to sell it, so he started a little cafe called Dew Drop-In. And there's a lot of restaurants—

Really? Dew Drop-In?

Yeah, like Dew Drop-In. Like D-O Drop-In. And so there's a lot of places called Dew Drop-In, actually. It was kind of a catchy little phraseology. There's a cabin in Brighton Girls Camp called Dew Drop-In.

Yeah.

And so the bottom line is that he had a place off a highway somewhere, and I don't remember the location, although I do think my mission president told me where it was. And he called it Dew Drop-In. And he would sell his chicken there to motorists. Back in those days—this is in the '50s, I think—people would drive those Route 66-era trips and things like that. People would go on road trips a lot.

And so he was trying to make a buck, having this little motel and this little cafe out front of the motel where he'd sell his fried chicken. And it wasn't working out the greatest financially. And some people told him, "Well, you need to repent of all your swearing and stuff. You need to go on this walkabout thing in Australia and do this repentance thing."

He's like, "Fine, I'll do that." Well, just listen—I'm telling you the story.

And so he decided he was going to do this, and he was going to go off to Australia. But he had a friend named Pete Harmon, and he lived in Salt Lake City. And so on his way from back east, wherever it was, he was motoring out to California. And then in California he was going to catch a flight and fly out to Australia to go on this walkabout, is what they call it.

What do they call it? Cleansing? Repenting? Coming-to-Jesus moment?

Yeah. You go out into nature and you ponder or whatever. And there was some Pentecostal preacher that was going to take him on this walkabout deal, along with a bunch of other people who had paid their dues to go on this deal. So he was going to go on this thing, and he had decided to do that.

So he stopped to visit Pete Harmon in Salt Lake on his way. And Pete Harmon is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And so he gets there, and he's still really confident about his chicken recipe, but he's just not a good salesman. But Pete had a successful business, and Harlan Sanders said, "You know what? I'm going to make dinner tonight for you at the cafe. You'll love it. You're going to love my fried chicken, and I'm going to make it for you."

And Pete's like, "OK, sounds good." And he's like, "But I need a pressure cooker." And Pete's like, "I don't have a pressure cooker." He said, "Well, do you know anyone that's got a pressure cooker? We've got to make this chicken."

So I think Pete's mother-in-law had a pressure cooker, probably for home canning. They got the pressure cooker over to the restaurant. They got the pressure cooker over to the restaurant. They got the pressure cooker over to the restaurant, which was on 39 South and State Street.

What restaurant?

Harmon's Cafe.

So Pete Harmon had a cafe. It was called Harmon's Cafe. And so they took him over there. They made the chicken. He showed them how to make the chicken, showed them the recipe. These are all the ingredients. He wasn't secretive about it, his chicken recipe. He said, "Here's how you do it. Here's how you know the technique. Here's the ingredients," yada yada yada.

He makes the chicken, and Pete's like, "Oh, this is pretty good chicken." And Sanders said, "There's nothing like the gravy you can make from the drippings." So he took the drippings and made some gravy, put it on mashed potatoes. And they had mashed potatoes and gravy with this fried chicken.

And Pete's like, "This is fantastic." And he's like, "Oh, I'm glad you like it. I'm going to head off on this walkabout."

So he goes on the walkabout, goes to Australia. And when he gets back to the United States—after about, I think it was a month or something—he goes back through Salt Lake. And he goes to the cafe. So Colonel Sanders is coming back from Australia. He passes through Salt Lake again, because he's going to stop and visit Pete again on his way back home, I think back east. And I think he lived in Kentucky. So I

think he lived in Kentucky and had stopped in Salt Lake, and I think that's where the "Kentucky Fried" comes from.

So he comes up to Pete's cafe, and there is a line around the building. And he's like, "What's going on?" Something's different. It was a happening place, but it wasn't this happening when I was here a month ago. He's looking around, and he can't even get up to the building because there are just people everywhere.

And he said there's a butcher paper sign. So Pete took some butcher paper and wrote, "Kentucky Fried Chicken. It's finger-licking good," on a piece of butcher paper, and it's hanging in the window of Harmon's Cafe. So he works his way in there and he's like, "What's going on, Pete?"

And Pete's like, "So here's your chicken recipe. It's a big deal. Everyone loves it, and we can't make enough of it." And Colonel Sanders is like, "Well, we never talked about you selling it." And Pete's like, "I know, but I just thought I'd try it, and it caught on like wildfire."

And he's like, "Well, what kind of a deal can we work out?" And I don't remember exactly how it went, but from what my mission president said, Pete said, "How about five cents a chicken? I'll pay you five cents per chicken—every whole chicken we sell, I'll give you five cents."

And Colonel Sanders is like, "That sounds good to me."

So he comes out of that restaurant rubbing his hands together, saying, "Five cents a chicken times 100,000 chickens—that's good enough for me." And that was it. That was the agreement: five cents a chicken. I don't know if it changed over the years, but eventually they would sell an eight-piece meal, which is a whole chicken, and for every one they sold, Colonel Sanders would get five cents.

And he's thinking, man, I'm going to be rich, because back then, if you sold 100,000 chickens, that's \$50,000. And he could see that was what was going to happen—they were going to sell. And so you think about it: since the '50s, how many chickens have they sold? Billions of chickens.

Anyway, so that's the start-up story. Later on, as the business grew, my mission president became the CFO. He was an accountant for Kentucky Fried Chicken. And he said—whatever—he was rolling in the dough. It didn't matter. He was stoked about that.

But later on, Colonel Sanders became part of the company, and I think he moved to Salt Lake. And my mission president would go around with him, and they would go places and stuff. And they started building a persona around Colonel Sanders. They said, "You're the Kentucky Colonel. You've got to dress like some country colonel from Kentucky—like some plantation owner-type guy."

And he was like, "Okay, I'm good with that." He was totally in on it. He's like, "Sounds good to me." It was Pete Harmon and everyone else—they thought, "We've got to build this whole persona of the Kentucky Colonel."

So he never had a plantation, but he dressed like this Kentucky Colonel, and he put on the act. And he was happy to do it. He would always wear the white suit wherever they went. He wore a white suit with a black string tie, the ribbon tie.

And this is the fun thing my mission president said: he carried around a gold spoon in his pocket. A little gold spoon. And they'd go out somewhere, you know, go to dinner, and people would say, "Colonel Sanders, you're not at your restaurant tonight." And he'd say, "You can't eat chicken every night."

But when people would order their meals, he'd take out his little spoon and sample it. He wouldn't let anyone eat until he had sampled everyone's food. He'd sample it just to see if it was good enough for everybody. Yeah. So he would sample with his little gold spoon. He'd taste everyone's dish. "Oh yeah, that's good." He was a connoisseur of food—he really was. He liked food, but he would just taste everything.

And my mission president said he used to know the recipes, but he didn't want to ever know them. Oh, and that was another fun story he told. Colonel Sanders used to make the seasoning up at home. He had a screened-in back porch, and he'd mix up all the spices himself to season the chicken. He kept the recipe in his pocket.

And one day one of the ladies in the office said to him, "What do you have there? What are you doing?" And he's like, "Oh, it's just the recipe for the chicken," totally nonchalant. And she said, "You need to keep that in a safe place." Because he had the recipe for the seasoning just carried around in his wallet.

Yeah—eleven secret herbs and spices.

And my mission president said they used to make the gravy from the drippings. And he said they stopped doing that—just oil and crispy stuff, pressure cooking in oil. And he said a lot of it is more about the processing than the seasoning. The seasoning is important too, but he said the recipes have diminished and changed over the years. And the gravy is not the same. They started making it from packaged gravy, and they don't use the same drippings anymore. It was too much work.

Nowadays the seasoning comes from a secret location. And apparently, to keep the seasoning recipe secret, they have two different companies mixing half the seasoning each. One company does one half, the other company does the other half, and they don't share. So nobody knows the whole thing. They put a lot of work into keeping it secret.

But here's the kick in the bum—the dumbest thing, I think. The world's first KFC was Pete Harmon's cafe at 39 South and State. Naturally, it evolved over the years. It started in the 1950s. I went to it in the '90s, and it was the same building Pete Harmon started KFC in.

Then, in the late '90s or early 2000s, they decided they had to keep the branding consistent, so they dozed it. They dozed the whole building. It became a vacant lot, and they built a modern KFC on the same ground.

And I'm like, you guys are stupid. It's not the world's first KFC. It's the ground where the world's first KFC was, but it's not the world's first KFC. It's like saying, "This is George Washington's axe—it's had three new heads and two new handles, but it's George Washington's axe."

So the world's first KFC does not exist anymore. It's been dozed. You can go to the location where it was, but that's it. I don't even think they kept the sign. It still says, "World's First KFC, next exit."

It's kind of fun, but it's sad too. I liked the old, nostalgic feeling of seeing the actual building. Now all they've got is a modern building and some dumb placard that tells a general story. It's not detailed, and it's just sad. It's a loss of history.

Bee stings, Culverts and Darts

I'm now going to tell the story of when Melissa got stung by a bee.

It starts with that.

We're with our cousins. We're with the Kenny Parker cousins and the David Parker cousins. So we're at the park with them. We're at Sugar House Park, which has these big culverts that are about two and a half, three feet in diameter.

All the water that I was talking about with the floods and stuff comes down through Sugar House Park too. It comes through these big culverts. Culverts are big enough that you can walk up inside of them. There's also a river going through there. Yeah, it's a river, but it comes through these culverts, these big ol' concrete pipes.

It goes underneath the road. It goes all throughout the park. There's actually two of them that go underneath two roads in Sugar House Park. They're cool because there's always water coming down them. In the summertime it's just a stream, a small stream of water.

Some kids are always playing in them. They get slimy with moss and stuff, so they're pretty slick. They're like little water slides. You go up to the top end of it, you sit down in the water, and just zing down the concrete pipe. You're going pretty good at the end. There's rocks right at the end that you're going to fly out and bang your tailbone on these rocks.

You can't walk up the pipe very well without slipping. You have to straddle the slime on the sides and try to walk up it. Or you climb up and walk across the road and get in the top end of the pipe.

"Is that what you guys did?"

I was the oldest and the biggest. I said, "Okay, I'll catch you guys at the end of the pipe. You come zipping down and I'll grab you so you don't end up in the rocks and crack your heads."

They would. They'd come flying down the pipe.

"Catch me! Catch me!"

"I will! I will!"

I'd grab them and pull them to safety, or stop them from flying out the end. They'd grab us and put us on the sides and go back and go around again. I was pretty strong, I guess.

"You were probably eight or so."

"No, I was ten."

I grabbed them and put them back on the edge and they'd zip down the pipe again. I remember there would be two boys on each side. Kenny was on one side and Ben was probably on the other side. Maybe Ryan helped a little bit too—Ryan Parker.

You guys were catching all the little kids. They were zipping down the pipe.

"I totally have no memory of that."

That's because you weren't there. You weren't there! You were talking with Laurie and Diane Parker.

"My goodness."

I think all of us were homeschooling.

"Yeah, they were."

That's why we were all together. We were having this little homeschool activity. It's not—well, we were running across to the exit, but it's that park up in there. The park's up there on that corner. But the pipe goes within the park. It's all within that Sugar House Park. It's not a busy road.

"Yeah, it's just the little loopy road that goes through the park. Past the pavilions and stuff."

So we did that, and then we were running around in the fields later. I ran to get a drink of water. Melody and I were running around and there was clover on the ground. Melody and I both stepped on some clover that had a bee in it at the same time. We both got stung at the same time.

I think I scratched it off and it hurt really bad. I think you actually probably pinched it and squashed the rest of the venom into you. That's probably why you had such an anaphylactic reaction. You probably got the full venom from the bee, its entire amount. Because if you would have scratched it out, you would have got a lot less venom and it probably wouldn't have given you the anaphylaxis.

So you probably grabbed ahold of it, which squashed all the venom that was in the little sac right into you, and then pulled the stinger out.

But yeah, I remember you were screaming and crying and I'm like, "Oh crap." So I took you up to Mom.

I remember getting the car and picking you up. That's the next part. So I was worried and I think I was like, "Oh, most okay." I asked you to help me with it. That's when I found out.

So I was trying to get you to Mom. We were all over that park and I don't know if we were even anywhere near where Mom was. But I remember getting Mom and saying, "The girls got stung by bees."

And you're like, "Okay, well, that's okay." She was busy talking. She says, "Well, there's not much we can do. Just go sit down over there. Put some cold water on it." Because there's not much you can do about a bee sting.

"You're like, well, it's too late now. You got stung."

We didn't know if there would be any problems. I'd gotten stung a bunch. We had bees. I was pre-teen. I was ten.

"Well, I got hit by a car after that, so I was like nine or ten."

You were a little. She was nine.

"How old were you?"

I think it would have been like three or four.

"Yeah, you probably were sliding down the pipe and I was catching you."

He was that little.

"I was probably watching him."

I doubt it. I was probably watching him sliding down the pipe.

"You were."

But I think he was sliding down the pipe. He might have been just—he must have been trusting you. Yeah, and he was fine. He didn't get stung by a bee.

So anyway, what do you remember about this?

I remember that Mom was preoccupied talking. And you were crying and moping and sitting there. And I remember the sun. It was a sunny day. And you were sitting there. And I remember you saying, "I'm having a hard time breathing. It's getting hard to breathe."

And I looked over at you and your face was puffy, and I'm like, "Mom, her face is all puffy. She got stung in the foot, but her face is all puffy."

And you're like, "What? Oh dear."

And so then she got worried. And that's all I can really recollect. And then Mom's like, "We've got to get you to the doctor."

And I thought that she—I thought that she got you in the car and just the two of you went. Because I think I remember still being in the park and Mom driving away. So I think that the aunts might have taken the rest of us home somehow.

Probably because I called FHP. Yeah, we went home and you called FHP because we didn't have cell phones back then. So we went home and I stayed in the car while you ran inside and called the doctors. It was Family Health Plan.

So when we got there, they were waiting for us. We had to go up an elevator. And they were standing up by the elevator.

"Are you the girl that just got stung by—" I don't know what they said.

You know what they said? "That was a lot of waste of time. Why didn't you go straight to the—why did you go home?"

Didn't know what to do. I was trying to figure it out. But I remembered picking her up. So I messed up and walked over here to get the car driven and pick her up, and I thought, "Oh my goodness, she looks—she's swelling up."

I had hives all over my body too. Which means her throat could be swollen.

"Yeah, her face was all puffy."

"I couldn't breathe. It was hard to breathe. My throat was swollen."

She was like, I remember hearing her going, "I'm having a hard time breathing."

"Your larynx is swelling."

But it's also inside your lungs.

So then you ran to FHP with her, which is down on 21st South—or was it down clear to Redwood Road?

That was the one? It wasn't the one off of 17th South?

Wow.

When I was a kid, there was an FHP off of 17th South and like 3rd East, over there by TV Specialists.

"Yeah, it was on 21st South. And it was just above TV Specialists."

We went to the second floor of the building. And it ended up being the dentist eventually. But when I was a little kid, it was the doctor.

Wasn't it more like towards downtown?

"It was down on Redwood Road, I think. But we could get there pretty quick. It's the freeway to get up on 9th West and you're almost there."

Yeah.

But at any rate, you ended up at FHP and they stabbed her with an EpiPen or what?

They put an oxygen mask on or something. They probably gave her a shot or something. They probably gave her an epinephrine injection.

Yeah. I've never first ever heard about all that. And then she had an EpiPen from there on. But you never needed it.

But that's an idea too. Maybe you weren't allergic so much as you just got a lot of that stuff in you.

Yeah, I never thought about that—when they pinched it into me. Because I've been stung since then and I haven't had a problem.

But also, as you get older, your body gets more immune to bee venom. And you're bigger. And with a little bit of venom, there's more blood for it to dilute in as well.

And if you don't get a full dose, and your body also develops an immunity to bee venom too. The more often you're stung, the more your body can handle it.

So beekeepers don't get as much swelling or anything. It hurts and they're like, "Ow, ow, take me out of here, bees!"

I've seen beekeepers on videos that get stung five and six times and they're just kind of annoyed by it and they're like, "I'm out of here."

Yeah, I had a couple of stings when we were doing the bees and they didn't bother me very much.

I got stung through my leather gloves by the bees when I was wearing leather gloves and doing bees.

"How?"

It stung my glove and I'm like, "Hey—ow!"

Another thing that happened close to that same time was when Ben lacerated his knee. He was walking on the outside of the house. He was walking along the cement ledge.

"Oh, yes."

It must have been where the brick sat later. Yeah. He fell on the concrete and it sliced his knee open.

Yeah, lacerated it pretty good.

I did that too. I was walking on the bricks and I fell and dashed my leg on my upper thigh. And Grandma Parker was over and she was like, "Let's put some cayenne pepper on it," and I freaked out. "Ahh!"

But it didn't actually burn. It was healing.

Yeah. Your body shrinks—the blood vessels shrink up from it. It's not cauterizing. What is it called? It's a—vasoconstrictor, not a coagulant. It causes restriction in the blood vessels.

Yeah, let's talk about how many times you went to the hospital. That's a great way to get stories.

And I remember swinging on that dang chain between the Shipp's house and our house as a kid and falling on that. There's that stupid chain fence. It was just like a chain between pipes and drooped.

That was the first scary thing that happened with our kids—me swinging on that and banging my head open.

"Yeah, you got the little—cutting my chin right here."

Yeah. But then was it Melody that got the cut on her chin on those beds in the basement?

Must have been.

She got one on me too.

I remember getting banged up swinging on that chain as a little kid.

Did Clarke once cut his head open and Dad just sewed it up?

He didn't sew it up, he taped it.

Clarke was trying to cut a brick or a pipe or something at once. Yeah, cut your head open.

Joseph did something at Hyrum once and it knocked a tooth out. We never found the tooth.

It was a baby tooth?

Yeah, it was. It was a little Ninja Turtles thing.

Oh my gosh.

I remember Ben and I throwing darts at each other. We found some old dart in a dumpster—I don't know where we got it from. We said, "Let's sharpen it up so it'll stab into stuff." And so we did.

We sharpened it up with a file or sandpaper or something. And then we're like, "Hey, let's throw the dart at each other."

Ben's like, "I think that's a stupid idea."

Of course it's a stupid idea. I thought of it.

So let's throw the dart at each other. And I don't know if he said yes or no, but I was going to throw it. So I chucked the dart.

And I was like, "You gotta dodge it, okay?"

I chucked the dart. It stabs him in the knee.

And he's like, "Ow!"

He pulls it out of his knee.

I'm like, "I'm sorry."

He hucks it at me. Stabs me in the belly.

I pull it out of my belly.

I'm like, "Let's not do this. Let's not do this anymore."

Yeah. Just the dumbest thing ever. We could have poked out each other's eyes. Just the stupidest thing.

But we were in the backyard by the old red apple tree. Remember that old red apple tree? It was dying away.

Yeah. "Let's throw the dart at each other, see if we can dodge it." Like we're some sort of ninjas or something.

I don't know. It stabbed us.

That was hilarious.

"This is dumb. Hey, this hurts. Let's not do this anymore."

And Ben's like, "Okay."

It's amazing we all lived to have some sort of normal life.

Oh yeah—the blow guns.

Yeah, I remember you guys having those blow guns. Those things just stick in stuff, man.

You shot the wall halfway.

Yeah. Someone shot it into an oak board—a chunk of oak—and we couldn't get it out. And bending that thing so hard, we'd pull on it and bend the dart up and couldn't get it out.

We had push pins and Nerf guns. There were BBs in the boys' bedroom.

When we gave our master bedrooms to Rebecca and Mary, Daddy and I fixed up the boys' bedroom—the northwest bedroom. There were BBs in there. At least one was in the baseboard, and some in the floor or something.

Oh my gosh.

I think I swept some up from under the carpet.

I didn't tell about throwing the firework into the Shipp's yard.

"Into the what?"

The Shipp's yard.

"Oh, that's terrible."

So when I was young, as people probably know, I was really interested in fireworks. And what I liked to do with fireworks was modify them.

So I had some fireworks. I had some ground bloom flowers. And I wanted to—this is when I was in the upstairs bedroom on the second floor of Ninth East, in the back corner by the Shipp's. There were all those windows that looked out into the Shipp's yard.

So I had ground bloom flowers in my bedroom.

And so one day I was packing, and I was like, "I'm going to dig out the end of this ground bloom flower. I'm going to put cap-gun caps in the end of it, and then maybe it'll be cool. When I light it, it'll burn off the flower and then it'll go and pop these caps at the end."

That's what I was thinking.

So I'm stuffing them in there, and I'm trying to wad these caps down there. And then I'm like, "I've got to get them in there tighter." So I got a darning needle—that sounds bad—no, a darning needle—and I'm poking the caps down there with a pointed needle.

They go off, of course, and it lights the ground bloom flower.

Well, this is in my room. And it's like—like a little rocket—zipping around. And I'm like, "Oh, no I'll light the house on fire—crap!" And I'm trying to kick it, but it's just zipping around the room.

There's no carpet at this point. It's just the wood. This is the raw two-by-four era, where there's just two-by-fours, and then the outside plywood, and then the outdoors. So it's not even finished.

But I'm like, "Dang it," because there's a lot of exposed wood. So it was zipping around, and luckily it never stayed in one place long enough to light anything on fire. But it scorched the wall. And finally it went out, and I was like, "Oh my gosh."

So I never told my dad. I tried to sand the burn marks out of the house so no one would notice.

But then another time, with the same ground bloom flowers, I was like, "I'm gonna light one, and I'm gonna throw it out the window and see what happens."

And I kept trying to light it with paper matches or something. It wouldn't light. So it finally got lit, and then I'm like, "Oh crap," and I threw it.

And it went, "Woo," over the fence, and "zzz," off into the neighbor's yard.

And they were mad. And they come storming over with the firework—the spent firework, the spent ground bloom flower.

“Your son threw a firework in our yard.”

And Mom and Dad are like, “Oh yeah, well, okay. What do you want us to do about that?”

They didn’t really react. They kind of thought, you shouldn’t throw fireworks out the window.

And I’m like, “Oh yeah, okay. Who does that—throws fireworks out a window?”

Anyway, they were just so mad that I had the audacity to throw a firework out the window into their yard, as though I was deliberately—

I was like, “I just lit it, and I was gonna throw it out into our yard. But I got nervous, so I hucked it, and it went further.”

And it went into your yard because it’s only three feet away from our yard—the back bedroom.

And so they were all mad that I threw fireworks in their yard, and I’m like, “Oh brother.”

“But it didn’t do anything, right?”

It didn’t do anything. It hadn’t caught anything on fire.

Anyway, so they were always complaining that we were harassing their kids.

“You guys weren’t the average neighbors, at least not as far as I know.”

Yeah, we weren’t. Definitely not.

It’s kind of like Brother Valden Christiansen telling the stories of when he grew up.

“Yeah, it is.”

“How many brothers and sisters did he have?”

Twenty. He was one of twenty.

He was a funeral director for a couple of states, and he tells wild stories of that.

But I stopped lighting fireworks in my bedroom after that.

“Well, you just kept throwing smoke bombs.”

Probably.

I don't think everyone ever knew about it, but it doesn't matter. Nothing bad happened, thank goodness.

I remember you had set up these booby traps on your ceiling with soda bottles.

Yeah, we had booby traps up in that bedroom so that if people came in, we'd pull a rope and this two-liter bottle would come flying out of the closet and clock them in the head—just like in Home Alone.

I wish that Daddy wouldn't have told all those pyrotechnic stories to inspire you guys to these crazy things.

I know.

Well, I learned my lesson. I haven't said many of my pyrotechnic stories to my kids because I didn't want them to do crazy things.

"Good."

We did a lot worse things with pyrotechnic stuff than that. Throwing a firework in the neighbor's yard is nothing.