

Conversation with 23 year old white male, Arkansas (Transcription)

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F: Back getting to the forestry service part, be interested in that, you said you were deadening timber. Been working with them long enough to know what they were doing with that, or what their projects are?

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S: Yeah, I know it real well.

F: What do you think of it?

S: Well, in a way in areas I think it's a good deal, because you can deaden the timber because it's just mostly big timbers falling over, anyways, it's going to waste. And they oughta deaden it, then sell it, and then like they're doing to most people and for many logs and <unintelligible text> pulpwood and that way they get money out of that and the other people gets money out of that. And you can make firewood out of it they give permits for you to cut free firewood off of timber that's deadened, and then they plant pine right back there in it most usually in the places that they deaden. Where in we can have more pine, more hardwood.

F: Do you think it would be better to have the pine or the hardwood?

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S: Well, we got plenty of the hardwood. We got more hardwood than most places I know of. But it's so rough to get to, you know it's not doing nobody no good and all but the loggers well they can get in and log it out. Most of it's the big timber and it's dying anyway.

F: Are the little - can the little loggers get in and get in on the picking this up or is it the larger companies?

S: No, it's just the little loggers usually. Just people that live around here that can afford to get to it and make money at it. If you don't they won't buy it, they won't have nothing to do with it, because it wouldn't be worthwhile because see you gotta take it all the way to almost the Ozark from here to sell it and they cut a lot of cross ties around here and they take them to Clarksville.

F: Did you ever do any logging?

S: Yeah, I did a lot of logging, a lot of pulpwood.

F: From the time you were back in fourteen or so?

S: Yeah, and since I been back here too. I've hauled many logs already since I been back here and pulpwood. Try and make a living.

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F: How long have you been off from the Forest Service?

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S: Twenty-third of last month.

F: What have you been doing with you time since you've been off?

S: Drawing my unemployment working to get it going - took two or three weeks to get it going. That and hauling firewood and cutting some trees around my place. I just moved into my place up here.

F: Where do you live from here?

S: I live about a quarter of a mile up the road straight up beside of the Post Office here.

F: That would be East of here then?

S: No, East is this way, West is that way, North is that way and South is that way.

F: I had forgotten those directions. Now what would be a normal day for you to go through?

S: Just around the house?

F: Yeah.

S: Well, usually I get up early in the morning and build a fire, first thing, get the house warm, bust a little wood, and I usually walk off down to the Post Office and get my mail,

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and then come back to the house. Split a little more wood, and just whatever I can around the house, working on the house, find something to do, and usually I watch TV or listen to the radio or take off and go visit somebody and see what they're doing.

F: Are you married?

S: Yeah.

F: Children?

S: Two.

F: How old are they?

S: Three and <unintelligible text> about five and a half months.

F: Boys or girls?

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S: Boy and girl. The boy is three and the girl is five and a half - right at six months.

F: How long have you been married?

S: Well, I've lived with this woman for a long time, but we just got married just about two or three weeks ago. But we've lived together for a long time, in Oklahoma.

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F: What made you decide to get married?

S: Well, I figured it was the best thing to do. Especially for my kids and everything, so and stuff like that. Plus I love her.

F: She's the mother of your children?

S: Yeah.

F: <gap> you cut any firewood for yourself?

S: Yes.

F: You try to sell any of it or do anything like that? Or just cut it for use around the house? Do you heat and cook with the firewood?

S: Firewood. Right now I'm cooking with firewood, and fixing me a Butane. To cook with that is.

F: And how about the television? You watch some of that - favorite shows or anything particular you watch?

S: Yeah I got favorite shows. Usually Simon and Simon, I usually like them pretty good. Magnum, P.I. He's pretty good. And I like to watch cartoons too. I usually get up early Saturday morning with my boy. I'm as bad as he is. We're watching cartoons.

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F: What's your favorite cartoon?

S: It's hard to say. Probably, I don't know. The Smurfs are pretty good. Little people, little green people. They're all right, that and ...

F: Did you ever watch the Waltons?

S: Yeah, a lot.

F: What did you think about them?

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S: It's a pretty good show. But it's not really what I'd say life it really is, but its pretty close in a lot of ways, and things.

F: See some of it in the life that you've led? Say around here?

S: I've seen quite a bit of it. Yeah quite a bit of it.

F: What about music? Do you play anything?

S: Well, I can play guitar a little bit, but I don't know, I'm nothing fantastic.

F: Favorite singer? Or group?

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S: I'd have to say, probably Merle Haggard or George Jones. I like both of them that well. That and Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings.

F: Do you have family that lives around here?

S: Not just right around here, but I do in the same county. In Coal Hill, my mother lives Coal Hill. My Dad he lives in Tulsa, they're separated. They separated when I was six months old. When I come here.

F: Did she every remarry?

S: Yeah, and he's dead now.

F: Do you get together with your Dad some?

S: Yeah, he comes down, he comes down pretty regular. He comes down. I see him every now and then. Spend the weekend, yeah.

F: Stayed pretty close through all these years? In and out?

S; Well, I went and lived with him a few times, when I was sixteen and I lived with him for about a year and a half, two years, something like that. But we just don't get along all that good. We're all right, I mean, I just can't live with him, and you know.

F: How about gardens? Did you put in a garden this year?

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S: Not this year. I didn't get back in time. But I am going to next year. I got almost an acre to plant as far as a garden.

F: How much land do you have?

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S: Eight acres plus forty.

F: Do you have forty you lease?

S: No, it's backed up behind the hose, the old home place.

F: An acre would be a pretty good sized lot.

S: Yeah, well that's what we always had. I got three sisters and two older brothers and it took quite a bit to feed us all back then.

F: Where do the sisters and brothers live?

S: Well, I got one that lives in Ozark, and I got a brother that lives in Cove Hill, and I got a sister that lives in Flat Rock, over there in Piney Bay, and then the rest of them here. And then I got a brother that lives in Lamar. And my other sister lives in Cove Hill with my mother.

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F: Do ya'll get together occasionally?

S: Yeah, we have reunion, Christmas, Thanksgiving, stuff like that, we all get together.

F: Even with the mother and father separated, and all you still have Pretty close family ties?

S: Yeah, aw well we was all raised together. We was never was separated. My aunt and uncle raised us til we was up pretty well so old.

F: With your garden, so you plant by the signs, or anything along those lines?

S: Well, I use some of the guidelines, but I don't just go by their book just completely, because up here time changes so much, see, up here every year ain't the same, it changes, a little earlier, sometimes a little later. That's the way it goes.

F: You just sort of play it by ear?

S: Play it by ear and watch the weather and see when your last cold weather is you know, where it won't freeze or nuthing, usually you plant potatoes about the last of February, well a lot of people if you go by the sign then you're supposed to plant on the fourteenth, but yeah a lot of times

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you can't do that, it may be arainin that day, you never can tell you know. Yeah, right.

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F: Do you know anyone that goes completely by the signs?

S: Well, I've knowed quite a few people that went by the signs, but they're dead now. But I haven't noticed anyone around here lately because I ain't been around by the garden, but there's a lot of people that goes by the signs around here, they believe in them.

F: Did they have pretty good success with it?

S: I'd say they had a pretty fair garden, but no fairer then anybody else had with the different soil, I mean you know. That's the main thing, I don't think the signs got a whole lot to do with it. It's your land and your soil that does. That makes your garden, how much you put into it is what you get out of it. You take 'taters, you can pretty well grow 'taters anywhere, they'll grow - as long as you don't plant them in the same place every year. Because it takes so much starch out of the land. But they don't grow good in the same place every year.

F: Do you try to use commercial fertilizers?

S: Well, I use mostly commercial fertilizers, but usually I try and get chicken litter or turkey litter something to throw across the garden spread it out every winter, then turn it under, see I ain't got mine turned under yet, and probably a lot of other people ain't got it turned under yet. But soon's it comes a good killing frost right after that I'll turn mine over that way it kills everything on top, your grass and everything when you turn it over. That puts your top soil all year right underneath your bottom, see where your plants are. Grows better.

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F: That piece of land that you're going to garden next year has it been used, or been a while since it's been used?

S: It's been a while, it's been probably a couple of years since it's been

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used. It used to be an old saw mill set there on that land where the garden place is, and it's always been a good garden. It's right on side? of a creek too.

F: Do you pump your water right out of the creek?

S: No, I never irrigate, never do nuthin to it, let the weather do it.

F: Sit around and...

S: Just hoe it and plow it. That's it.

F: What about times of the year? Do you - as far as living up here are there special times that you like?

S: Now I like the winters up here really, but summers alright too, summers you know you don't want to do nuthin' it gets so hot up here, lay around on the creek, fish and swim, whatever. In the wintertime you gotta get out and do something up here to stay warm. You know, you don't mind working then, 'cause you can work and feel pretty comfortable, it don't seem to bother you.

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F: Do you hunt?

S: Uh-huh. I used to didn't, I wouldn't kill nuthin for a long time. Beside it wadn't worth killing things. But I still hunt deer and squirrel, that's about all I ever hunt. I don't turkey hunt, nuthin like that.

F: Do you use an old deer that's put away as part of your food?

S: Yeah, skin her out and cut her up, in deer season. Squirrels, I usually skin them and eat em, either that or put two or three of them in a good pot of beans and let them cook with the beans gives them a good flavor and you can eat the squirrel too, and the meat will just fall of the bones when you cook them with beans and stuff like that.

F: What's your favorite food?

S: I'd say biscuits and homemade gravy. That and fried potatoes and beans, and I like meat, and I like hamburger meat pretty good.

F: Any special remedies as far as medecine that go back in the family?

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S: Well, when I was a kid yeah, a lot of - I had to take a lot of family medicines when I was a kid.

F: Like what?

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S: Well, like when we <unintelligible text> my grandmother used to make tagalla tea all the time and make us drink it. When my face would break out or stuff like that that's for bad blood, which it works.

F: What is it?

S: Tagalter tea. Bushes usually grow right up there on side of the creek we'd rake them up and take em in and boil them down and it looks just like tea, boy that's some of the horriblemest tasting stuff you ever drunk in your life, but it works. I tell you it sure builds your blood back up.

F: Tag...is that the bush?

S: Yeah, it's just a bush, yeah.

F: Tagalter bush?

S: Well I don't know, I don't think it's called a tagalter bush, but that's what we called it, or that's what I've always known it by. Tagalter tea is it, the bush may be called Tagalter, I don't know, it's been so long. My grandmom lived to be ninety-three, before she died.

F: Are there still some of the bushes around here?

S: Oh yeah, yeah here.

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F: Do you make it now?

S: No, no ones made it since mom died. I never did like it. Had to force me to drink it. I mean it worked, you'd drink it for about a week every day and I guarantee you can see the difference. If you's broke out or anything on your face or anything where your blood gets to looking better and your face clears right up.

F: Would it work on something like poison ivy?