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Interviewee: Jacob Barazini

Interviewer/Recordist: Ellen Kendrick, Samuel Kendrick

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Others Present: Jackson Kendrick

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Transcribing Conventions:

Use of square brackets [] indicates a note from the transcriber.

Use of parentheses () indicates a conversational aside.

Use of dash - indicates an interruption of thought or conversation.

Use of ellipses ... indicates a discontinued thought.

Use of quotations “ ” indicates reported speech.

Use of *italics* indicates emphasis.

Use of underline indicates movie, magazine, newspaper, or book titles.

Names of interviewee and interviewer are abbreviated by first and last initial letters.

Time is recorded in time elapsed by the convention [hours:minutes:seconds].

[00:00:00]

EK: So it's Wednesday, May 19, at 2:41pm and we are talking to Jacob I'm sorry, I don't remember your last name.

JM: Barazini. Just call me Jacob ABC like in the Navy. [Laughs.]

EK: No, I know I need to know how to say it correctly.

JB: It's (Spells) B A R A Z I N I.

EK: Verazini?

JB: B with a B.

EK: Barazini. Jacob Barazini and we are in Chanute, Kansas. Yeah, I don't want to not call you by your name. I don't think Jack ever told me what it was. So this is like, so if we paid 25 Come on, we can walk around. You paid 25,000 for this 15 years ago"

JB:47 Well, I bought it then I spent a bunch of money on it. Now I need to do, I put a new prop on it. So just over the years that's what I spent on it.

EK: Do you ever fly it?

JB: Not really? No. I need to fly it again, haven't flown it in years. I got some parts. I took some parts watch it Jackson here for a second. [Noises.] Oh, I didn't put the covers, didn't put covers I took the mags I had some something on the mags I took them out and didn't put rags in it. I should have put rags in it. Basically got to put the rest of it together and fire it up. See what it does.

EK: So is it just to buzz around in and look at thing?

JB: Pretty much. It's ah, you take it to like fly-ins, the like, air show.

EK : Do you ever go to those?

JB: Yeah, I used to want to got it. But now not so much.

EK: We were talking about Oshkosh a little bit ago. That's the big one isn't it?

JB: Yes. It's gonna be around this year. Yeah, go well, if I can go it's kind of fun going down. I was gonna take that thing over there. And and that's...

EK: This one? What's that?

JB: That's a twin Comanche. That's a Piper made airplane.

EK: Yeah.

JB: It's one of the better made dual engine airplanes. They're fast they can hold a lot of weight are very economical. The systems are very simple. And then...

EK: And what about this one?

JB: This is a Piper Tri Pacer but somebody else owns it. It's a, it's an old like they try to make it like a 172 Cessna. It's pretty much obsolete these days.

EK: So it just sits there.

JB: Just sits there collecting rust and dust and everything.

EK: Yeah, it looks pretty dusty. What's behind it? What's that?

JB: That's an ultralight.

EK: Oh, this is an ultralight. Oh, really?

JB: If you really want to kill yourself. You fly one of them things.

EK: I've never seen one up close.

JB: It's a, as you see it's made out of cloth and the engine is like pretty much a lawnmower engine. It's, it's very...

EK: It's dusty too.

JB: Yeah, because the guy just...

EK: He doesn't want to die. Is this the fuel tank?

JB: No, no, just the way that they won't flip over.

EK: Oh. [Laughs.]

JB: The fuel tank is, I don't know somewhere. He doesn't even have it on now.

EK: Wow. That's just kind of like a glorified hang glide, isn't it?

JB: Yeah, pretty much. That's where it came from.

EL: Yeah.

JB: And this thing's had fun with the wing folding and people...

EK: Oh. Nice.. So what, so this is your one that you fly to spray in?

JB: Which one? While I was assessed and determined, this is that's a waste of 85,000 bucks. This one is this one is worth over 85,000.

EK: This is the first drama derived scene.

JB: Yeah, I thought it'd be nice having one of them. But...

EK: No? Why? What's wrong with it?

JB: It's a, it's huge. It sucks a lot of fuel. It makes a lot of noise. And we live in the jet age now. So...

EK: Kind of neat, though.

JB: Yeah, that's what I was thinking. I mean, I can't get rid of it anyways. The prop got to come off because it got like some kind of service or something. I need to take it off and got a cylinder bad on it. So one of these days. I'll...

EK: So this is your spraying plain.

JB: Yeah, that's one of them.

EK: Because this is like everybody else flies Air Tractors that we've talked to. But you said you said something about the fields being small. Is that why you...?

JB: Yeah, this is it's good because now I see it got winglets. All my airplanes have winglets.

EK: Is that a winglet?

JB: Yhat's a winglet. And basically what it does, when you go, when that wing goes through the air, the byproduct is you get wingtips of washes. So basically what it does, it kind of breaks off here and kind of gets bigger and bigger. Now the spray that comes out here kind of spread out, or it gets caught in the vortices and then it starts kind of traveling around and drifting around. Now that thing what it does, it eliminates the vortices. And then it kind of push the stuff down. So it doesn't kind of get caught in the, you know, in the airstream and pretty much that's kind of the idea of it.

[00:05:35]

EK: So what's the deal? People are like flocking in to steal jobs?

JB: Well, everybody, or for a lot of us, we all got expensive airplanes and bigger planes. And everybody wants more work. So they, it used to be years ago that if you worked in an area nobody came.

EK: Right.

JB: Now the tenants started going to the co ops. Like every co op, go the manager and it's so great. Now what they do, they going straight to farmers and be like, Oh, we got 20 airplanes and so great. And now they're also selling chemicals. So basically, they can sell chemical cheaper than what the co ops do.

EK: You mean the pilots are selling chemical?

JB: Oh, the companies.

EK: Oh, okay.

JB: So that if you're a farmer, you're like, Okay, we'll sell you and we'll spray for that much money. Now this guy here, his charges X amount, we charge less.

EK: But isn't it, shouldn't it be about the job that you do? And not the price?

JB: Not really, because people around here they kind of like to get screwed by their own kind?

EK: Yeah.

JB: So you know, if you're from out of state or something, then like, No, you're not one of us. But if you're somebody like that they can relate that you're one of them. Then it's okay, you can nail.

EK: So where do you fit into that?

JB: I don't.

EK: [Laughs.] You don't?

JB: No, I really don't.

EK: But you've been doing this for how long?

JB: I started, I went to air school in 1988. To show you how old I am.

EK: Yeah, well.

JB: Oh, this kids over here.

EK: They don't know nothing though, so... we just can't tell them that.

JB: No, you see when you're young you standing here. And you look at the top. You know you're gonna get to the top over there. And the top look so great. We're gonna get a job. Get married, have kids. Everything is gonna be so wonderful. Okay, we are on top that thing and we're all the way down. All we do is that will help us...

EK: [Laughs.] No, Dusty says landings are mandatory. So no, no nose dives here.

JB: We're only gonna do a mentor at least once.

EK: Yeah, that's right. You are. Yeah, yep. Well, Sam was talking about Sam Styron was talking about the, the, people who have come in to like his area around Harrisonville. And underbidding. Like it's been maybe in the last 10 years, it's escalated. Is that true for you here too?

JB: Yeah, that's, well, the thing about it, like a guy called me from Butler, right next to where Sam is.

EK: But yeah, Harrisonville was here and Butler is here. And then Nevada and there's...

JB: And this guy got, they sell chemicals. And they, they spray, let's say about 70 80,000 acres of fungicide. So he calls me up, he's like how much you're going to charge an acre. I'm like, given whatever price is. And he's like, I can get somebody to do it for way cheaper. Because his thing is that, okay, if I tell him, okay, I'll give I'll charge six bucks an acre, he's gonna charge the farmers nine bucks an acre. Now, he's collecting the money. So if they do 80,000 acres, times three, that's 240,000 bucks just for him making a phone call to me. But there'll be people at work for that cheap because you know, you got billion dollar plan, you got to you got to keep the cash flow going.

EK: Right.

JB: So what they're gonna do is they're gonna go out and have complained that they're going to go like, Okay, we got a certain swath on that airplane. Now, the higher you go, the more it's going to spread out. So this guy's got to like spray clinic if you know what it is. And they go over the string so they fly as high as a hanger and we got at 90 foot swath. Now this thing would get, some of them would get hundred foot swath, 95 to a hundred. This thing would get about 65-70 with a wing. So these guys go really high and go, Oh, I'm getting 80 foot with a Cessna fly really high and put less water on and the quality of work starts to degrade.

EK: Right. It does. That's something that everyone's like really worried about. Everyone we talked to, the quality of work, and that just set how important it is. Because if you don't do a good job, you won't get rehired.

JB: Not quite, but, and again, people like to get screwed by their own kind. And it's really, it really happens because people you know, ag pilots, it's a very, very short season.

EK: Right.

JB: It's very, everybody plans calling in the same day. So when they want to spray everybody want to spray today. So basically for most pilots, it's like okay, now the timer starts how much money can I make between here and here? Because that's it.

EK: The 75 days of hell to quote Dusty.

JB: That's 75 days because it's between you know, it's,

EK: Is it longer than that?

JB: No, it's shorter. I mean, for us it is because we've got a long season here. But for people up north that all to do is spray corn. It's a 45 days. I mean, like they might fly 35 days because you get too much rain, too much snow too much, you know, something to add to something.

[00:10:37]

EK: So, like a 35 day spray season. Wow.

JB: For them guys anyway.

EK: Yeah. Like in what, North Dakota?

JB: No, no, up here, even up north of Kansas, (indecipherable). Northern Missouri. Yeah.

EK: Didn't realize that.

JB: You had to have a very short season. They, they might boil, again, they might, like the corn might be this high and might put some fertilizer on or something. But other than that, it's just it's a very short season.

EK: So around here, it's mostly wheat and beans, you know,...

JB: No, wheat just a little bit, then you have pastures, a lot of pastures. And then there's cor, some corn not much. It depends on the rain. And then there's some beans. Again, it's a very bad place here because it all depends on rain. We don't get rain. It's like the soil kind of suck. You know, like, where you're at, you can deep dig fifth foot down. And here. I mean, it's that much. That's it.

EK: So have you thought about going elsewhere?

JB: I tried, but it just, I went to Iowa. But I got there a little too late. And I didn't have big airplanes and, and by the time I kind of got some things going he just wasn't enough to justify having all expensive airplanes.

EK: Yeah. Brad said that, there's like, well, he was, you know, he's in Missouri, in Booneville. He said that, that there's no protection against people coming in. That Missouri doesn't have that.

JB: No, Iowa used to have it. It's like I used to live in Iowa for a while. And only Iowa residents could, you know, can fly over there basically, or can supervise other people flying but now anybody can go over there. Just Well, it's like I talk to the farm, the agriculture chick that works there well she's not a chick, but she's like, all right. And I kind of told her that, you know, it's very difficult to get co ops to work with you because of all of it and she's say, You got people from Louisiana and Arkansas. Yeah, they come over with like, 10 grand stacks of cash. They got couple of girls in the car. I mean, that's that's what it became.

EK: Interesting.

JB: Yeah, it's a little different.

EK: Is it discouraging?

JB: Well, it's not,... the biggest problem I'm having is because I'm old now. When I was younger, when I was like this kid's age, I can get I go to drink all night, sleep for a couple hours, hopping up and go fly all day. No problem. Now, it just wears you out flying, just especially when it's hot. Like my grandparents came from Russia. So like my grandfather lived in New York. Then he moved to Rochester. And I didn't understand it now. I do because he moved back.

EK: You mean he moved back? To Russia?

JB: No, he moved from New York from the city. He lived in Rochester New York.

EK: Rochester. I used to live in Rochester.

JB: You did?

EK: Yeah.

JB: Well you probably knew him.

EK: [Laughs.] I probably did.

JB: And he worked there for like 40 years because he just like the cold and now I understand because the heat really wears me out I can be in the car. I don't like the cold but I can, I can function in the cold. In the heat, not so much.

EK: Yeah, it's pretty debilitating.

JB: Um, and people around here you know that, you know, they used to it, they say can but they can't. I can deal with the cold, I can be minus 50 and function but in the heat not so much.

EK: Genetic, isn't it?

JB: It's very genetic. And the sun. I mean, I got sunscreen on constantly and I'm covering myself up because the sun is just like, I get all these spots and I'm so sensitive. Because in order to... See that I have it here in my hand is because how I hold the stick?

EK: Yeah.

JB: No, no. Have it here is that how...

EK: Does that one's like, tucked down?

JB: That's rolling the throttle over there.

EK: Yeah. So you, tell, tell me again, how long you've been doing this?

JB: Since 1988. Whatever that translates to be?

EK: Well, that's like 30, 32. Is it 32? That's a long time.

JB: Yes, it is.

EK: Do you have a family that lives here.

JB: No, no.

EK: Just you and Chanute?

JB: Just me here. Yeah, my family's all East or in Europe, basically.

EK: Yeah. Do you go visit them?

JB: I go, Christmas every year in New York.

EK: Oh, that's good. That would be sad if you didn't.

JB: I'm gonna go this year, and I'll go there. You know, I'm a big city boy I'm...

EK: Well, what are you doing in Chanute then? This is nowhere.

JB: OK. Like in 1994 or something I bought my first airplane.

EK: Yes.

JB: And I'm like Ima Google and see what the most losers in the US [Lauhter.] and send me here, and here I am.

EK: Or in Nevada?

JB: No no. Actually I went I drove through Nevada, but there's like, I came here and I met a bunch of people here. And the farms, I kind of got comfortable here because I know a lot of people and every time I went somewhere else you don't know anybody and that's just why I kinda stay here.

[00.15.30]

EK: That's it. Yeah, it does suck you in.

JB: Even though it sucked and the flying suck and everything is terrible here. [Laughter.]

EK: Not everything.

JB: Yes. Everything.

EK: You have friends.

JB: I mean, yeah, I got friends here. But I can find friends anywhere.

EK: Yeah, I bet you could. I'm sure you could.

JB: Not really, it (undecipherable)...

EK: So does your family still live in Rochester?

JB: No, no, my mom lives in New York. Okay. My sister got a sister over there, A Sister back east.

EK: Yeah. Yeah, I didn't like Rochester very much.

JB: Yeah. Buffalo. Who the hell want to live in Buffalo.

EK: Yeah, who would.

JB: So yeah, the only time I got to Canada, I go though Buffalo. And I go to the peace bridge or whatever. I go to Niagara Falls.

EK: I've been to Niagara Falls. That was one. That was one good thing I was in, I went to school in Rochester for a while. And I didn't like it. I didn't really care for the community. It was not that welcoming. You know? I mean, I didn't feel like it was because I grew up in the Midwest, where you tell everybody all your secrets in like, 20 minutes, because they already know 'em. You know, and...

JB: That's what I say, you know, around here when you get divorced, you don't really lose your wife. You just lose your turn. [Laughter.] One of them things.

EK: Yeah.

JB: No, I kind of like New York everybody's to themselves. And there's a million people. That's what I like, the big cities. They got good food. Here, the food suck, the grocery stores suck. It's just like,...-

EK: Well, at least you can fly to visit. Is that, is that what you do when you go visit? You fly yourself?

JB: No, I think the airline for a flight. I hate flying. I really do. I really dread flying.

EK: So you are not the pilot who was in love with flying from the time you were old enough to walk?

JB: I thought, but I thought I was. But it kind of went away very fast.

EK: Yeah. How did you get started in this?

JB: Which part?

EK: Like all of it. Like, it was 1988 and you started...

JB: No it was 1985. I was in (undecipherable) New Jersey, I got start taking flying lessons.

EK: Why if you weren't, is that when you still thought you were in love with it?

JB: Yeah, that's when I thought I did.

EK: Okay.

JB: And then I got all my licenses. And I'm like, and they had bunch of private jets over there. And I was like, maybe I'll get my jet license and start flying jets and and then start playing around and,... I didn't really like this whole you know, you gotta dress nice. And so you got to carry them rich people suitcase. And I'm like, you know what that's kinda suck.

EK: So is that like corporate flying?

JB: Corporate flying.

EK: Yeah, you guys don't seem to like that very much, even though most of you have done it that we've talked to.

JB: And then I flew. And then I took that I did some spraying after a while I went back flew them Lear jets. And then the captain, he went to American and Denny's like, I can hook you up in American. And at that point, I'm like, and then in the late '90s, they kind of went down a little right and I'm like,

EK: Deregulation.

JB: And then I'm like, well, maybe I'll buy a spray plane even though it kind of sucked in comparatively spraying was, wasn't that good. But I don't know, I just stuck with it instead of going to the airlines. And then I got a job in Chicago flying corporate. It was a brand new Citation. I mean, that thing, you know, that was like 15 years ago, whatever it was, that thing was awkward. When the computers came out, everything was computerized. You can't You can't just go on the airplane start it up and go. You had to go out there, turn a computer on and let it reboot. Now if you do something too fast, you have to do it over again. And that thing I mean, it was just a nice little airplane. But the problem is in Chicago, half of what you make goes in taxes. And then I'm like, Well, if I'm going to work half of my year for taxes, I'll just take off six, six months.

EK: So that's what you're doing.

JB: Yeah, but if I wasn't with airlines, you know, okay, I'm not the smartest guy in the world. So Polly was there like a 737 Captain or something? Yeah, I'll be making a quarter of a million dollars a year working 11 days a month.

EK: Eleven days?

KB: Eleven days. And since I was been there a long time they have a board in their allies, and seniority. I can just pick my routes you know and all you do over there, the copilot does all the, check this pre flight and all that stuff. We just take off, press the button, the autopilot, you know tell thank you for flying whatever airline you know. Have a flight attendant getting you coffee then at night a nice hotel suite, food, and then you go and do whatever. Yeah, that's just... The the thing, it just wears you out, the up and down and... Yeah, I got to the point that the only time I want to smell jet fuel burning is if I go on vacation somewhere.

EK: Yeah.

JB: That's how bad it is.

[00:20:16]

EK: So is that what you do? The other six months of the year?

JB: Yeah, kinda kinda... I kinda go away. I hate the cold here. I like the cold somewhere else. But I go to warm places. I like to go Florida, I go out of the country a lot.

EK: Yeah. Where all have you been?

JB: I don't like South America too much. Because South America, have you ever been over there?

EK: No.

JB: Well over there all them Mexicans and South Americans. Oh, look at your car, oh it's OK, your American, we could rob your shit from you because it's okay. I like Europe. But Europe is expensive, but it's cold in the winter. So it doesn't work too well. So I like to go to Asia. Asian people, it's cheap. The weather's nice. And they have respect to us old people, you know. Plus, like you go to Vietnam and Thailand. They have a lot of Russians stuck over there. Oh, because it's close. And it's cheap and,... Now the Russians, you don't mess with them because they're crazy. [Laughter] And the Vietnamese or the... they always gonna try to screw with you. But nobody screws with the Russians. So when I go there, I don't have to worry about anything.

EK: So there's a good community there? Are there people that like go every year who you reconnect with?

JB: No.

EK: Nope. Just you? Do you travel by yourself?

JB: For the most part. Well, nobody else can travel. You know, (undecipherable) [Laughter.] Nobody can really go for your bands. And that's why all them guys here that you talk to, they're all like, Oh he goes and he comes and it you know. Well they're married so they can't do what I do.

EK: I think they're jealous.

JB: No, no.

EK: No, I think they are. You know, I think that even though they love what they do, I think that they wish they had that freedom.

JB: Well, that's what I thought years ago. That's why I never got married.

EK: Yeah, well, that's, your life is no longer your own then.

JB: No, especially the girls I used to date. Jackson, take notes. [Laughter.]

EK: Yeah, take notes please.

JB: Jackson here. I told you that. Should I say, no I shouldn't I say that?

JK: Yeah, you can say anything.

JB: It's like you, nobody talks about same sex marriage?

EK: Yes.

JB: When you get married? It's the same sex. [Laughter.] Go on the kitchen sink the washing machine, it's all the same. every

EK: Every day. [Laughter.] That is, yeah, it is same sex marriage. The same sex every day. Yeah. So is that like his words of wisdom to you?

JK: Um-hm. Every time I've talked to Jacob, I always come away with snippets of wisdom.

JB: Yes. It's just because, okay, I work like four months a year. I don't have a wife, kids so I got a lot of time to think about stuff. Most people just don't have the time and (indecipherable)...

EK: Yeah. Do you have a dog?

JB: No, I'm not around to take care of a dog, and the dogs are worse than kids. You gotta give them attention. I would love to have dogs. you can

EK: You can leave them in the car. If you cracked the window though.

JB: Not for four months. [Laughter.]

EK: I don't know. Can't do that with children.

JB: Yes, you can skip that thing on and... [Laughter.]

EK: Just open the window more. So that when you were talking about Vietnam and Asia, Jack's into Asian food right now.

JB: No, you go to South America, Mexico, okay. Mexican food (undecipherable), ground meat and beans. Mix it all together. And there's that's it. In Asia, they got different combinations of food.

EK: Is that one of the reasons you like it?

JB: Yeah, I love it.

EK; Yeah. He's been making us watch like all kinds of YouTube videos.

JK: I could eat like that. Every single day.

JB: I want to go to Japan. I want to go with my nephew because I wanted \$1,000 pair of that sushi. And maybe also 1,000 days of that back or whatever. kabyle steak or whatever.

EK: Yeah.

JB: Yeah, what to do this year. I still got, I was there a couple of years ago. And then this whole corona thing. Then I went to Italy and the thing blew up in Italy, so... So I still got a ticket from

Hamburg to Hong Kong. And then I got a ticket from Tokyo back here. That was going to take Ed and we were going to take the train in Siberia.

EK: So you were serious.

JB: Yeah, we're serious about, and then there's that AN-2, you know, the bi, biggest biplane. It's got that engine over there. The same one. Now that end, that airplane, I want to fly one of them because it's just a massive big airplane. So I want to fly it and skis and have a place in Siberia, you can do that. And I like Russia, the Russians, the problem with Russia is every time I go there, and I look Russian, so people talk to me in Russian and then when I can't only speak Russian, and they get all upset because they're very patriotic and Okay, you're Russian, and you live in the USA you're traitor. That's how they look at you.

EK: Yeah, I can imagine.

JB: Now you go to the Ukraine...

EK: But you speak Russian.

JB: Um, not to good.

EK: Enough to understand?

[00:25:26]

JB: Only when they curse me out I can understand. [Laughter.]

EK: Well, that's a good thing to be able to recognize.

JB: Now you go to the Ukraine and you telling, you know I'm from Russia, but I live in the U.S. now. They're all like, Oh, greencard Let's go. Everybody wants... the Ukrainian people, they are like, yeah, get me the fuck outta here.

EK: Yeah. Well, considering the politics of all of that.

JB: I mean a school teacher, I talked to one of them gals, she was making \$300 a month. That's like three zero zero.

EK: Wow.

JB: I mean, the whole area over there, I mean all them, all Yugoslavia, all them, they make nothing. So it's not like here, you cross the border, you get a McDonald's, you know, vouchers. And all them illegals, they get free medical, airline ticket, wherever you want. I mean, this is a great country here.

EK: Is it?

JB: Not for us? [Laughter.]

EK: I don't know. I don't know any different. So I don't, you know, I wouldn't know if it was great or not great.

JB: Oh, let's see here. If I can find it. Somebody put on...

EK: How come you're not flying today?

JB: Because the weather is, it's gonna rain, not gonna rain.

EK 26:54

Yeah. I didn't know if you can just fly under the ceiling. Or?

[Interviewee pulls up video discussing white privilege.]

EK: You like, you're on tiktok?

JB: No, that was on Facebook. I don't do tiktok, that's for kids.

EK: Oh, yeah. You do Tick Tock don't you?

JK: Occasionally.

EK: That's an interesting perspective, isn't it?

JB: Well, the problem is, you know, I talk funny about I have an accent. But I'm white. So I can cry racist. I mean people have.

EK: So they like, they are like, prejudice against you because of that?

JB: Yeah. Because that, around here. You know, years and years ago when I started when I was like, I'm gonna go spray, somebody kind of mentioned, you know, in the Midwest they're a little bit.

EK: Yeah, well, that's true.

JB: Well, I didn't realize how different they were or I didn't want to believe in it later on in life. It actually is. People look at you like, Oh, you talk funny, or you're from New York, or whatever.

EK: So, on the political spectrum, do you get involved in that at all? Or do you just kind of like...?

JB: I hate, well, I grew up in Europe, so I really hate liberals because I think they're idiots.

EK: Yeah.

JB: But the, you know, the, I don't know, kind of middle of the road, more like leaning republican because I kind of don't like high taxes, low fuel prices, I kinda more like, like into that, you know, no, taxes that kind of like Trump and Bernie wants to raise taxes and spraying is not good for you. Of course it's not good for you, but still...

EK: Well, spraying is essential to the agricultural economy. And I, you know, if you're not doing it, someone's doing it. Someone is going out onto a field and putting down whatever is required to keep the grain production up and the cattle fed, and people like eating.

JB: You have to do it because you know everybody talks about global warming. You know what the number one thing you got to do if you want to take down global warming? You know, it's the number one thing you got to do?

EK: What?

JB: Control the population?

[00:30:03]

EK: Oh, yeah.

JB: I mean, we've got too many people in this world. I mean, you got to guard, they need concrete, they need more chemicals because there's just not enough food, you gotta use chemicals. They use gas, they use... in China in India, they are using air conditioning because they don't want to be hot anymore.

EK: I've heard that the future of our food sources is insects.

JB: Insects?

EK: Insects. Yeah, crickets.

JB: Okay. In Thailand they do, or China they do eat crickets, snakes, lizards, whatever.

EK: Yeah, it doesn't sound that good to me

JB: Very fancy, but...

EK: Yeah. So, uh... Sam, do you have any questions? Did you have any like, thoughts?

SK: Well I did until you asked me.

EK: Yeah. Sam's like a serious introvert.

JB: I see, he's a...,

EK: Yeah.

JB: Am I the only one who hates spraying out of everybody else?

EK: Um, no, I don't, I think that, there, it's not the spraying, I think there, are like, there are. One thing that everybody seems to have in common is that they love the independence. Like, they don't have to go to an office, they don't have to put on a suit. They don't have to sit in a cubicle or behind the desk. They love that aspect of it. I think like most people, you know, like, when you're in a structure like this, they kind of push against the regulations. And, you know, the farmers want this and the government wants this. And that's, you know, there are all these demands. Yet within that structure, there's a great deal of, like job freedom. So I think they all love that aspect of it. And most of them, most of the people that we have talked to have been in love with flying for most, like most of their lives, like Emily said that she started flying when she was 13. And with her dad, and Austin said he's like fifth generation pilot. And the other, the other guys that we talked to said well, Dusty, didn't say that, but most of the other people said that they were in love with airplanes from the time they were little. You know, that just the airplanes themselves, the, whether it was the mechanics or what they did, but I don't think anybody ever like thought when they were 10 years old, I'm gonna be a ag pilot. I'm gonna, I'm gonna spray crops for a living. I think it's just a way to be more independent. What do you think?

JB: Well, when I was 10 years old, I lived in a big city so occasionally we drive to the country and see a spray plane. I'll be like, that'd be so cool, flying one of them. But probably, that kind of steered me to that direction instead of getting that jet license. I'll to take it to my other hangar here.

EK: Okay.

JB: Show you some more wasted money.

EK: We have plenty of that. We live on a farm.

JB: No, that's serious wasted money. [Laughter.] At least on a farm you know, the land is worth something and...

EK: That is true.

JB: This hangar is a little bit more like a cave.

EK: What's in this hangar? Or is it a surprise?

JB: No, isn't a surprise. [Laughter.] No, what surprise is just now since I got so many airplanes don't just fit in one hangar. I kinda took over that hangar too.

EK: Oh. I didn't know that. How many do you have?

JB: I got two. This is like more like that's why you know, it's a little damp and all that stuff. But that's why.

EK: Okay. Here we go. This is more what we're used to seeing in hangars. So these are yours as well.

JB: Yes.

EK: Well look at you.

JB: I know. That's how to waste money or how to make, how to make a little bit of money from spraying and just start with a lot and have very little leftover by the time you....

EK: Yeah, well, you can do whatever you want. You don't have to answer to anybody. So...

JB: No, I got a bank to answer. [Laughter.]

EK: Yes, and that is one thing that everyone mentioned that that they always have the bank. So...

JK: You see an Air Tractor and a Thrush side by side.

EK: So this is a Thresh?

JB: That's a Thrush.

EK: I have not seen one.

JB: On by the Air Tractor, is the Thrush, it just... I don't know, I might trade it. Get a Jet Ranger.

JK: What about the air tractor do you like over the Thrush?

JB: The visibility is better. It's got more power ratio per, whatever, you know, you can load that aircraft to the tracks. You can't. It will take off short patches.

[00:35:16]

EK: The Air Tractor or the Thrush?

JB: The Air Tractor. It's fast, it's got smaller engine, so it will suck way less fuel.

EK: Yeah.

JB: This is more comfortable, it's bigger. So if you sit in it 14 hours a day, it's more comfortable sitting in that one.

JK: Are there, like, handling differences loaded or unloaded between them?

JB: The Thrush is more stable. It's a little slower. That is, this one's faster. But some of the Thrushes is a little slower.

EK: How do you decide which one you're going to take out?

JB: It's you know, I got I got four of them flying also got this Cessna over here on the bag that I use. That's the first one I ever bought like 25 years ago. Or 27 years ago.

Now this thing here, it's very extremely economical to operate it you can put car gas in this thing. Sucks about 14 gallons an hour. So it's very cheap to operate.

EK: What do these guys use an hour?

JB: Just saying about, probably 60, 65 an hour and that about 55.

EK: So 16 an hour?

JB: 14.

EK: 14 an hour? 60 to 65 an hour

JB: About 55.

EK: Yeah, that's a big difference.

JB: But this takes car gas and car gas costs two bucks.

EK: Yeah. What does...

JB: Them two are jet fuel. The ones over there are the AV gas and have gases like four something a gallon. And this engine here? It's average is about 80 gallons an hour.

EK: Do you work on, do you do your own mechanics?

JB: Yeah, for the most part.

EK: So did you just learn along the way or...?

JB: Pretty much. Uh, when you have to, I mean, these two jets, they go to a gal on the other side of Missouri there's a shop over there and they go they do the work on them. And then I got a buddy of mine who's a mechanic and you know, we come in after deer and we just kind of go through it. But (undecipherable) is probably the only one in the country that has six airplanes and no pilots. [Laughter.]

EK: I would say. So far anyway. Why don't you?

JB: It just, uh, the good pilots want to go to Illinois. And I can't have somebody that doesn't have any experience here because the fields are so small. And we spray a lot of them pastures that that stuff just walks all over the place. And you got to hassle for work. Like if you look at Dusty and everybody has one pilot basically. Like Dusty and Kevin and Sam, well he got somebody but...

EK: Yeah, he said he had one guy that, but he hasn't always.

JB: Yeah, that's it just I need to insure, my insurance is really cheap. Because I've been doing it for so long. Now you got you got to add somebody and then you got somebody to fly to just beat the piss out of them airplanes Because...

EK: Because Yeah, I did hear I read something, I don't know, that when you're a young pilot, your insurance is just outrageous.

JB: And then these engines, that's like, you know, \$250,000 engine and it takes somebody young and, it's all goes on temperature with engines. And if you over-temp it, over-torque it, just, it just ruin it, and then you got to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to fix it.

EK: Yeah. Oh, I know what it was, it was a video of Leland Snow, talking about a two-seat trainer. Like a side by side. And I don't I mean, I don't even know where you'd find one.

JB: Yeah, they have 'em, they make 'em.

EK: He said that, that it's a great way to start out a young pilot who cannot afford to buy into the business or the insurance involved. And that when you've got the two seaters that it's, you can like mentor somebody.

JB: It's the responsibility of, because usually you're going to start somebody in a plane like this.

EK: Yeah.

JB: But still, you know, just the responsibility if something happens to hit something to crash to kill themselves, you know, I just don't want the respons... And then you get somebody good. You know, it's a limited amount of work you can give him because we're here.

EK: Right.

JB: And if you send him and if he's good, he's gonna go to a, you know, somewhere else. And if he's bad, it's just gonna cost you money.

EK: Have you helped other young pilots get started?

JB: No. Kevin says you're his go to guy though. Like when he has...

JB: Yeah, yeah. I help him out when he needs help or something, I go help him out.

EK: Yeah. I mean, that's important, I think to have somebody who you trust.

JB: You know what the darn thing is since I came from New York, and I didn't know nothing about spray, so I went to the school in Oklahoma. Now me and the guy that owned the place we, we kind of became buddies. So every time I came to the Midwest, I stayed with him. And when I bought this airplane here, I took it over there to park it because I didn't know anybod. And now that I'm buddies with the guys that own the place in Missouri, they have like a whole company, the sell airplanes, they fix them, they sell insurance.

EK: Where is that?

JB: A Hay Tie (?) Mid continent. So that they're now further like, and so they, they really helped me a lot. And then I know people, you know, like Kevin and Dusty, and some more people. And that really helps.

[00:40:48]

EK: Yeah, it seems like a pretty tight community in this area. Like when we got into North Missouri, not so much. They were like, they like they knew of, well like Brad slaughter. Of course, you guys know one another. And but like,

JB: Did you talk to Dave Pence?

EK: No, but I looked him up on online. He was on my list. And I know he's big into PASS and like the NAAA and the safety issues. I but I saw like I saw a video of him.

JB: Now he's been doing it for what, 30 years.

EK: Yeah.

JB: He's been doing it for a long time.

EK: We haven't talked to him, but he's part of that group up there. In North Central. Yeah.

JB: Yeah, you should try to talk to him. He's, he's a nice kid. Well, he's not a kid anymore.

EK: Yeah, he was one of the names that Sam Styron gave, gave to us to talk to. Him and Floyd mackle, McElwain.

JB: Oh, he's kind of senile now I think.

EK: Well, we're about to find out.

JB: Are you going to go see him?

EK: Yeah, tomorrow?

JB: Yeah, he's... Okay, now he's been doing it for like, 2 million years. Yeah, he's, I mean, he's been around forever. [Laughter.] Yeah, he's been around forever.

EK: Yeah. How old is he?

JB: He's like, my dad's, like 87 or 85, I think. I don't think he flies anymore.

EK: He, what did he say?

JK: He said that he flies ponds. He'll fly, like some sort of chemical input to waterways. And he does really tight fields that he doesn't want to let his son do because he thinks it's too dangerous for his son.

EK: But his son's probably 50 years old.

JB: Yeah, his son is almost my age. Probably Russell. Russell.

EK: Yeah.

JB: Now he had his girlfriend that used to spray. And then she ran an airport up in Atkinson.

EK: Oh, Bethany Root.

JB: That's the one.

EK: Yeah.

JB: And then you know, when you're a cute blonde, you get to ride in a P-51. And the guy tried to show off and that's kind of sad.

EK: It's very sad. Aaron was talking about that.

JB: Aaron was there, he was there. That's who, he told me the stories. When he was there.

EK: Yeah, he was. That was really disturbing to listen to Aaron talk about it.

JK: It seems like Aaron has had more than his fair share of difficulties with flying.

JB: Yes, Aaron did. But he can, he's lucky. He just bounces back up constantly. He just like...

EK: He showed us some pictures of the Air Tractor that he crashed in.

JB: Somebody, Jesus loves him, I'm telling you. If it been me or you, we'd dead now.

EK: Yeah, the cockpit was just like, sitting there.

JB: I mean, you hit the tire that, I mean, the powerlines are tall. You hit them, then it flips does all that stuff and land straight up and he just walks away. It's you didn't want to hit the power, I mean...

EK: Yeah. Have you ever crashed like that?

JB: Not like that.

EK: Not lately?

JB: Not, not lately, and not like that.

EK: But you've crashed?

JB: No, not yet.

EK: You've had close calls?

JB: Every time you fly to close. I went through wires. And now you always almost hit something and his stuff jumps on you. And it's like, the only thing about spraying you know, like, you got to be young to start with it. Because you kind of build your instincts. And you can I mean, even when I'm paddling, he kind of work on autopilot. Now I got some older guys that wanted to come fly. Like if I'm not going to start a 50 year old or 45 year old because your brain cells you can't train the little brain cells, you have to do something new. It just doesn't work.

EK: That makes perfect sense.

JB: Because I used to teach and you know, you get kids like his age and then they could they go drinking all night again. And then they just sit there and they play video games and they play tiktok and they're just like all natural. Now guys in the 30s a little less, guys in the 40s they already, you know they just can't, can't learn anymore. The only ones that can learn are doctors for some reason you get doctors in the 40s they just because they're trained to learn all the time.

EK: Dusty was older, I think.

JB: He wasn't that old. He wasn't 45

[00:45:02]

EK: No, he wasn't. He might be now.

JB: But when he started, he wasn't. But Dusty's a little different. He's very, I mean, him and his wife, they're very goal oriented. Very, really.

EK: Yeah.

JK: He also has a, probably more than his share, like, I guess physical intelligence, like he knows where his body is at all times.

JB: No, that's very, it's not like, you know, you fly airlines, and you just go by numbers. And these things, you got to fly by feel, you got to feel how that thing because as people, you can only concentrate on one thing. I mean, when you fly, you kind of look around and look at the powerlines, and watch your GPS and all that stuff, and you go really fast. Now, if you take somebody that don't have experience, he thinks about flying. So when you think about flying, you don't think about spraying because you just can't mentally you can't. Now if you think about the spraying and don't think about flying, you're going to like years ago, like 30 years ago, the biggest cause of crashes was people turning, when they turned, they were stalling. Now, the biggest thing is hitting things.

EK: Because there are so many things.

JB: There's so many things to hit. But now these things are a whole lot safer now. Because like if you look, years ago, okay, you buy this thing for 15 grand, that's how much I paid like 15 grand for that. Okay, you take it, okay, it's not serious. It's just 15,000 just be the piss out of (indecipherable), no big deal. Now you get one of these, that was almost half a million. Okay, now that you got a half a million machine, you're gonna treat it a little differently and a little more respect, because, you know, it's a lot of money. So that's, that's how it changed. Because bill, Okay, I got it. I mean, that airplane cost twice as much my house so... So you're gonna take care of it a little better. Now, you know, you're not going to do stupid things like you would if you just had this thing.

EK: Do you? Do you trade, trade up, like every...

JB: No, I help the economy, I buy high. And it just sit here basically. [Laughter.]

EK: You just buy it.

JB: Okay, that outfit that I buy, I get, if I take on airplanes that nobody else wants, I took the drone Madeira. If I will not take it, nobody would've took it. Then I took that Air Tractor. I probably spent like 80 grand fixing it. Then I took this thing here I'm still you know, still got it. I gotta take it after the year and spend like, the, the fuel tanks are leaking. So you got to actually go on the bottom and take the rivets out. And where the flaps go there is a little bracket and it shakes and vibrates after a while. So you got to open the whole thing up, drill all the rivets out, open it up rivet the bracket back in and then close it back up. So I'm gonna go do it with their mistake and it be like five grand. So basically, I helped them you know, they take them airplanes as trade when people buy a brand new airplane. So usually when they buy the fella come they think about a couple of years ahead and then they don't take care of the airplane and a beat the piss out of it.

EK: Right.

JB: And then they trade it and then a trade high. And then the guy is like Oh, I can give it away for less because I'm gonna lose money. So basically, I think the airplane is given the price to one, I pay to fix it and that's how I help them out.

EK: Also keeps the bank loans at bay. I mean, when you're talking borrowing, when you borrow like we're talking half a million million dollars, that's,

JB: That's a big chunk of money.

EK: Yeah. I don't know what the interest is on that, but I'm sure...

JB: It's about four or five but then you got insurance that insurance is like, you know, kind of, can be eight percent of of what the airplane's worth, so it can be like... Well, I got cheap insurance because I'm the only one flying and I've been doing it for a long time. But it'll go up to like 40 grand for just this airplane here.

EK: The insurance is 40 grand a year? What Kevin said what they're like two, only two places that you can get insurance ?

JB: Yeah and 2, 3, 4 companies that do that.

EK: Yeah. I wondered about that. Because, you know...

JB: It's a very small market.

EK: Yeah, it is.

JB: And every time you have a drift claim or a crash. It's expensive. How many drift claims, (indecipherable) 25 and he'll tell you how much money insurance are?

EK: Yeah. Yeah, he said he was done. He, he liked the flying but he didn't want to do it for himself anymore. That it was just too much pressure to try to do.

JB: And them guys that he works for now, they kind of figure that one out. And like every time he goes spray, he got to run through them. And they're like, okay, I, like the stuff I got over there, the chemicals. He was supposed to spread but I'm not, no he's not spreading it. So they're kind of keeping an eye on him because he's like, oh, work I'll go do it. Now them guys, they're kind of, okay. You know, they're like, no, he do this or do that.

EK: Do you have loaders or a loader that helps you?

JB: I got sometimes that's... But I don't have anybody full time because I just don't do enough for that. But I got a guy that if I need him, he comes with a couple of guys that work all day.

[00:50:10]

EK: They probably, well, Jack's loaded for Dusty some. And it's hard work. And then Dusty tried to, he hired a kid that I had had in class, because I taught school for 30 years, high school. And I said, I don't think he'll last.

JB: Oh, he's got the econd year. That's what I told him this year when and I seen him and I'm like, I'm seeing you're still here.

EK : Yeah, well, I don't know if it's the same guy. But anyway, I, you know, it's just like, it's hard work.

JK: And you're up on a wing.

EK: Yeah. Scary.

JK: Six feet from the spinning...

JB: No, you're not on the wing. You can just hook the hoses, hooked to chemical, the fuel and voila.

JK: I was loading fertilizer for Dusty.

JB: Oh, that's that's no work for a white guy. You know. [Laughter.]

JK: I got to the point where him I was calculating his turnaround and everything and then when he would come off the...

JB: Now that airplane when I got it, it had one of them. The hopper gates?

JK: Yeah.

JB: To kind of open up. And then you just drive the trucks loaded up. You got a little auger on that kinda squeezes in and but I took it off because I hate doing fertilizer and what do you call it? And just extra weight. I just took it off because nobody has the truck that can go and just put it down here. So I just took it off.

JK: I think there are only a couple guys who make those trucks.

JB: Yeah, I don't know just I say the spider for the (indecipherable) that you see that massive thing over there. You need like five people to put it on.

JK: What do you spray with that?

JB: Just small patches. I think that, you know, sometimes you got 40 acres. I'm not going to fly one of these guys for 40 acres.

EK: You could. You could do that.

JK: I actually, I actually saw a company makes an electrically powered model of an Air Tractor. Yeah, I'm saying I saw and I immediately started trying to figure out how I could rig up a tiny little tank with a tiny little pump and a tiny little spray boom.

JB: Well just to have a smoker, just hook smoke through that if you got that much time on your hands, you could finally rig something out.

JK: Oh, Dusty and I were talking about that because I sent Dusty the link and all I got in reply was need.

JB: [Laughter.] Well, maybe get to work on it. But that's funny. And pretty much that's all.

EK: That's it. That's your life in one hour.

JB: My miserable life in an hour. Yeah.

EK: Yeah. Before, before we take off, if you wouldn't mind signing a release so we can...

JB: Oh sure, sure.

EK: Which plane would you, which plane would you like to have your portrait in front of?

JB: Oh, I don't need one.