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AN ORAL HISTORY

with

STEPHANIE BYNUM

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi. The interview is with Stephanie Bynum and is taking place on August 29, 2006. The interviewers are Stephanie Millet, Linda VanZandt, Jeremy Carroll, and Karen Lundy.

Millet: This is an interview for the Center for Oral History of The University of Southern Mississippi for the Hurricane Katrina Project. Today is Tuesday, August 29, 2006. It is one year after Hurricane Katrina hit the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We are at Biloxi Regional Medical Center. The interview is with Stephanie Bynum. The interviewers are Stephanie Millet, Linda VanZandt, Jeremy Carroll, and Karen Lundy. So would you tell us first for the record please, state your name and how to spell it.

Bynum: My name is Stephanie Bynum and it's S-T-E-P-H-A-N-I-E and B-Y-N-U-M.

Millet: Thank you. And when were you born?

Bynum: I was born January 2, 1969.

Millet: Sixty-nine, the year of [Hurricane] Camille.

Bynum: Yeah.

Millet: Hurricane Camille. Where were you born?

Bynum: I was born in Fairfax, Virginia.

Millet: So you were pretty much out of the way of [Hurricane] Camille.

Bynum: Yes, I was.

Millet: That year, except I know it did make storms in Virginia, actually.

Bynum: It did, it went up the East Coast, it did.

Millet: That's right. So did you grow up in Virginia?

Bynum: I grew up in Virginia, childhood, right outside of Washington, DC. My dad worked for the Capitol so I—I grew up around the Capitol and got to go to work with him all the time.

Lundy: What does he do?

Millet: Very interesting.

Bynum: He was what was called a head doorkeeper; they were like security. Didn't get to see him very much because they were always in session weekends, holidays, but had a good childhood, a very good childhood.

Millet: A very interesting place to be.

Bynum: Yes. And my dad's family's from here; that's how I ended up back here. My grandmother got sick, and they ended up down here and then I came after.

Millet: That was my next question: how did you come to Biloxi, Mississippi?

Bynum: Family.

VanZandt: How old were you?

Bynum: I think I was eleven or twelve when I came down here the first time. And my mom's from Virginia, so we went back to a little island off the Eastern Coast called Chincoteague. And then—

Millet: There are wild horses, wild ponies there?

Bynum: Wild, yes, wild ponies. In fact, Camille went up the Coast and hit Chincoteague, and it was underwater—devastated back in '69 when that happened, so.

VanZandt: How interesting.

Millet: Did it get any fallout from [Hurricane] Katrina this time?

Bynum: No, they didn't get any fallout from Katrina, no. I still have family up there and so, but.

Millet: Well, I guess we're going to open it up to the Katrina experience. We're particularly interested, in this project, about the experience that nurses have had with Katrina—that medical personnel, I guess I should say, have had with Katrina. But we really are anxious to hear anything that happened to you during that storm.

Bynum: Well, like I said, I've worked here for nine years. Been here for every hurricane, here for [Hurricane] Georges. I used to bring my daughter with me, when I just had my daughter. She would come for the hurricanes with me, but then this last couple of years I've had to leave my kids. They go to my dad's, and I come here. So this time we watched Katrina, where it was going to go. (laughter)

Millet: Hold on, and let me change this.

Bynum: That's OK. I had—

VanZandt: Can I ask where your father lived? You said your children went with your dad.

Bynum: My dad lives right outside of Birmingham.

VanZandt: OK.

Bynum: So for the last couple of hurricanes they'd go to Birmingham to my dad's.

VanZandt: And how old are your children?

Bynum: I have twin boys that are seven, and then I have a thirteen-year-old little girl.

VanZandt: And what are their names for the record?

Bynum: Christopher, Bryan and Marissa. And I'm usually not very upset when I have to send them, but this time we watched the hurricane seeing where it was going to go. And when we found out how bad it was turning into—I think I came in on Sunday, you know, we were all supposed to report to work. I had worked that week, or that couple of days right before that, I think worked Saturday, and I had worked with Marge, the nurse we lost.

VanZandt: We heard that story.

Millet: She went home to Gulfport.

Bynum: She went home after work, and we told Marge to come back, and she just was hardheaded. And her family was there and that's where she stayed, but I had worked with Marge that day. But I came in on Sunday and I just cried. I cried the minute I hit the floor Sunday, just leaving my kids and then listening to how bad it was going to be and, you know, you're used to—I'm used to the hurricanes. I'm used to the wind. I really, it doesn't bother me that much but just listening to the buildup, listening to the news and the buildup.

VanZandt: Which so many people didn't really believe or put much stock in, but you did. It sounds like you did.

Bynum: I did believe. I believed, I think, I just listened to how bad it was. And knowing that we're on the beach, I mean we're just not even a throw from the water. And my brother works at Beau Rivage and my sister-in-law works at Beau Rivage. So listening to them, you know, they had to board up. And everybody kept asking me, they kept saying to me in the hospitals, "We're not going to evacuate." And we're just like, "No, we don't. We can't. There's too many people to take care of." And a lot of people hollered, you know, "We lived through Camille; we can live through another one." I hear that all the time, and I just hate it. Sunday night, I think we all were here. We went to sleep, got up, got full rest for work, rain was going, wind was going. Yeah, we would look out windows. I don't think we realized how bad the storm was. From our vantage point, we saw wind, we saw debris. We would look out the back of the hospital, the front of the hospital, but you really could not tell how bad it was. We would watch the water come up, we would see the debris and—

VanZandt: How high do you remember seeing the water come up?

Bynum: I think I remember seeing it going up to the front of the hospital, up to the very front of the hospital where you drive in, the driveway. It came up to there in front of the Medical Arts(?) Building and, the Medical Building, and then there was just a big pile of debris. And then all of a sudden it was back down. We lost windows; scared us all so bad. Patients, I remember we had a new postpartum mom, and she was just so scared. And her baby was on the floor with us. So we had her and her family, and we finally were able to get them back down to the third floor.

VanZandt: What floor did you work on?

Bynum: I worked on the fifth floor. I worked telemetry. I worked the cardiac floor and we had patients in the hallways. We had to move them in the hallways. We've never had to—any hurricane—I've never seen as many people in the hallways, but you could really realize the severity when we started to have to move them in the hallways. And when we started losing windows and just—you could see the ceiling tiles were lifting where the wind was coming down, and you could just see them lifting and—

VanZandt: Was the roof blown off at this point, do you know?

Bynum: I think at this point we had lost the roof, and they were evacuating sixth floor.

Millet: Is that the top floor on the hospital?

Bynum: The top floor of the hospital they had started evacuating. And luckily the windows we lost didn't have patients in the room. We had the patients out of the rooms. And when the wind would shift we would have to—you know, depending on which way the storm shifted—we would have to move patients off of hallways. At

one point we had them all around the nurses' station. And we were full. We carry thirty-two to thirty-four patients and we were full. We also had specialty, Biloxi Specialty Hospital, part of their wing was on our floor, too. So their nurses were there, their personnel.

Millet: What would make them designate it specialty?

Bynum: Well, there's a—it's the hospital that was down on the beach, and it was called Biloxi Specialty Hospital. And they were like a step-down hospital, long term, people who were on ventilators.

Millet: Long term. What does step-down mean?

Bynum: They've been in the hospital like an acute-care setting, and you get them to a point where they can go to like rehab.

Millet: So they had an acute event.

Bynum: Right, they had an acute event.

Millet: Like a heart attack or a stroke or something.

Bynum: A stroke. And we got them well, to a point where they could go to be discharged and go to rehab, or if they're on like antibiotics. They need long-term antibiotics, I.V. [intravenous] antibiotics. And there's a point where you can discharge them but send them to another, the down, step-down and they can get their antibiotics or just medications that they couldn't get at home. But Biloxi Specialty has always been like family to us, too, because we all work together. So they had to bring their stuff over when they evacuated their hospital, and they're lucky they did evacuate.

VanZandt: Is that the building that's across from Hard Rock Casino or?

Bynum: No.

VanZandt: Where is this building, where is it located?

Bynum: Biloxi Specialty was located next to the Santa Maria, right down next to—the Santa Maria, which was a retirement community.

VanZandt: East of here.

Bynum: It's east of here; it looks like there was a McDonald's. And then there was the Santa Maria, which is a big building still standing. And there was like a hotel that used to be there, and then the Specialty Hospital—

Millet: Right on the beach?

Bynum: —right there on the beach. And they lost, they flooded the first floor. They lost their whole first floor was gutted, so they were lucky they did evacuate.

Millet: So these patients had some chronic problems.

Bynum: Yes.

Millet: To be addressed.

Bynum: They were very, a lot of sick patients there, too. So they brought theirs so they had their staff though, which was really helpful, very helpful. And they helped us, too, and we helped each other.

VanZandt: Yeah, sure.

Bynum: We always seemed to, fifth floor always seems to help each other. We always joke, we laugh, we have a good—the nurses, some of our nurses aren't here any more that were with us. But what's left of us from Katrina are still here and still together, and we still laugh like family and we talk. I don't know what I'd do without Kim and Bryan and Rachael, you know. It's just when you leave your kids.

VanZandt: And there were other people in your position who had also left their kids and had to send them away.

Bynum: Rachael, Rachael had to leave a new baby and her husband.

VanZandt: So you all have that in common in each other, the support?

Bynum: Yeah, Bryan left his wife, uh, his girlfriend and his son. And they had to—and they brought, he had a house right off the beach. And I remember him just being so worried because he hadn't heard from Lee(?) or his son, and come to find out they had to ride out the storm on the roof, so it just. But we worked the day. We moved patients from hallway to hallway trying to keep, you know, everybody together and talking. Doctors, Dr. Majeure(?) is our cardiologist, she was right there with us nursing, too, right alongside us, Rachael, me. People who weren't supposed to be working were working. That's the way we always do. The day went on and we still would look out windows. And I think at one point it was so weird because I was giving a patient a medication, and I was looking out the front where the Bombay Bicycle Company used to be. And I saw the Bombay, and I turned around to give the patient his medicines and turned back around and the Bombay was gone.

Everyone: Wow.

(everyone talking at once, inaudible)

Bynum: At that point I was like—and the Waffle House was gone.

VanZandt: “Let me try that again and see if I saw that right.”

Bynum: It was—the Bombay and Waffle House were right there, and I turned and when I came back they were gone.

Lundy: But this Waffle House sign stayed up, and everyone has commented about that.

Bynum: It did. And the Hard Rock [Café] sign, the guitar, it went up a couple of days before the storm, and it was still there—I mean, it was just like—

Lundy: Like maybe they should’ve made the whole building out of what the sign was made of.

(laughter)

Bynum: We still did not realize. You know, we all kept fussing because we hadn’t had a shower. We all felt so dirty. We were wondering about our families, and when the storm started coming down, you know, you saw people out there that really shouldn’t have been out there but going through debris already.

Lundy: You mean in the storm?

Bynum: Yeah, right toward the, you know, when it was still, winds were still up. And we weren’t allowed out of the hospital, but there were people—there was debris in front of the hospital. And there were people going through this debris, and come to find out they had found a body in the debris after the storm.

Millet: They may have been looking for loved ones.

Bynum: It just, well—yeah, I hope so.

Lundy: I wonder; I didn’t know

VanZandt: Were they looters or were these people looking for—

Bynum: I think they were looters because I think they were just looking—they weren’t look for, they were picking up stuff out of the, that’s why we were like, we could not believe that. We called security and said, “Look, go check.” Because you know, there was no telling. We all were thinking, you know, if we ever get out of here we were going to go jump in somebody’s swimming pool. (laughter) We were thinking, you know, after this storm we were going to go find a swimming pool. We

were thinking there was a hotel down right from the hospital with a swimming pool, and we were thinking *after this is over with we're going to the swimming pool, guys*.

VanZandt: I bet that pool didn't look too good, though.

Bynum: No, we went looking and there was no swimming pool. It was horrible. When you got the first look, the next day at daybreak we got to leave the hospital.

Lundy: What was that like?

Bynum: It was horrible. It was devastating.

VanZandt: Did you have a car here that you got in?

Bynum: I didn't.

VanZandt: Or did you just walk?

Bynum: I didn't. My car, like, my fiancé took my car with the kids. And that's usually what I do. I don't leave my car here because I, you know.

VanZandt: So you just walked around?

Bynum: We all walked down to [Highway] 90.

Lundy: Could you drive on 90?

Bynum: You couldn't even get, no, I couldn't even imagine trying. We couldn't even leave the hospital, I mean we walked out of the hospital, but we walked. We got out and walked.

Lundy: How far could you walk?

Bynum: We started walking down 90. We walked down, got out and we walked on Reynard. It was just like, I don't know what to describe it as, like a bomb had just—it was just like devastation. You can't even describe it. Everything was gone. You just were like this is gone, this is gone, look at what it did. And, you know, everybody was worried about their houses and—

Lundy: What did the Beau Rivage look like at that point?

Bynum: Pretty well intact. I think it was one of the ones that withstood the most. And do you know I didn't even, we didn't even realize about any kind of waves. The big wave they said came in? We never saw it. When we look back on video, somebody had a video and was on the parking garage at the Beau Rivage videotaping.

And the water was all the way up where the I-110 [Interstate 110] loops, the water was—we didn't see that.

VanZandt: Was that because your windows were boarded up or you were just too busy focused on what you were doing?

Bynum: Well, I think we were so focused on moving patients and taking care of patients that we did not see because you could see the Beau Rivage sign. It was all the way up to the—I mean, way past where the neon, and we didn't even pay attention to that. We didn't see all that water. And looking back on films, I can't even, I just still can't imagine being in this and doing this. I can't even imagine being a part of it at times.

Millet: And it sounds like you're a little disconnected from it.

Bynum: I don't know so much if I want to be disconnected because every time I look on TV, you know, this week has just been you're flooded with TV stuff about Katrina. And everything you see, you just can't imagine it happening. I didn't go down Highway 90 till Christmas Eve, going toward Biloxi here, going toward Edgewater Mall and Gulfport. I had never been on 90 until Christmas Eve. And just seeing the devastation, seeing everything gone, the old houses just—it made me cry more. You know it would just—well, a year ago before the storm everything just was so normal, and then after that one day we were fighting traffic to get here. The day after it happened the emergency stuff started kicking in, you know. HMA [Health Management Associates], the hospital that owns—the company that owns our hospital was just so supportive.

Millet: And that's Health Management Associates—

Bynum: Yes.

Millet: —for the record, HMA.

Bynum: HMA, they, uh—

VanZandt: What kind of things did they do immediately that a—I think they got a generator here?

Bynum: Got our generators here, got tankers of water here. I mean we—our hospital runs on city water. City water pipes were destroyed so they had to cut our water off. They don't teach you in nursing school, hurricane nursing.

Lundy: No, we don't.

VanZandt: What did you do without water?

Bynum: They don't, they don't teach you. They don't prepare you for hurricane nursing, and that's one of the nursing—one of the nursing teachers asked us—

Lundy: Didn't get into that, did we?

Bynum: One of the teachers—

VanZandt: Get her a manual now, right?

Bynum: One of the teachers asked us, "What can we teach you guys?" And I put my hand up, I said "You need to teach us, you need to teach the people who don't know that when you work in a hurricane area in a hospital—

VanZandt: Absolutely.

Bynum: —you're going to be at that hospital, and there are going to be conditions where you have to make do with what you have." You have to, uh, the days after they got us—let's see, we had tankers and water, gas, they got gas for us. They gave us, you know, they would ration it out, but we had gas to get back and forth to work. You know so many people didn't have that. Food, water, clothes. The day after the storm we each took turns going home, and somebody let me borrow their car. And I live in a trailer. I live in a trailer on three acres of land, and you know how they say during a storm in a trailer, "Get out!"

Millet: Right.

Bynum: Well, let me tell you, my little three bedroom single-wide trailer, the most damage it had was the skirting was gone.

Millet: You were lucky.

VanZandt: Really? And where was it located?

Bynum: All the trailers—I live in Vancleave. I had no, barely, you know, no damage.

Millet: You were so lucky.

VanZandt: That must've been a really nice sight to see.

Bynum: And people who had these thousand-dollar homes were just gone.

Lundy: How do you explain that, are you high or was it—

Bynum: No, I'm not around water. I'm not around water but I, you know, and I keep, I always worry about tornadoes because that area is—but I just look at myself as lucky. I was one of the lucky ones.

Lundy: Vancleave is?

Bynum: It's north—

Lundy: Right there, northeast?

Bynum: It's right, I live right north of I-10 [Interstate 10].

Lundy: I-10, right.

Bynum: Just a little bit. But—

Lundy: You still got high winds, though—

Bynum: Yeah, that's—

Lundy: — because y'all got—

Bynum: We got it. We got—

Lundy: —we got high winds where we lived.

Bynum: That's what I said, we didn't get a lot of water but I got high winds, but I'm always—

Lundy: You still got high winds.

Millet: Trees going down.

Bynum: I had three trees go down, but they went in the opposite direction of my trailer, so I was lucky.

Lundy: You're anchored well if you didn't get any.

Bynum: Yeah, I was lucky. When we looked at this damage, you know, we looked at the anchors. There was a couple of them that were like this—I mean just about out of the ground, and all I could think about was *thank you*.

Lundy: But they were still in the ground.

Bynum: But they were still in the ground. But I was lucky I had a home. I didn't have electricity, but I had a home; that's all that mattered. And my kids were OK.

Lundy: When you had, during that—did you have to work in the ER [Emergency Room]? And if you've already talked about that I don't want you to recap it.

Bynum: I didn't have to work in the ER.

Lundy: You stayed on the unit.

Bynum: We all, we volunteered, you know, we could if they wanted to. When we started, as soon as this storm was over with, you know, we never closed our doors. We had a door open, during the storm. And we had people coming in, I remember the day after we had a man come in, and he had survived with him and his dog. And I saw his—last night I bought *People* magazine, the brand new edition, and in there was this man and his dog, Mr. Mitchell and Frisky.

Millet: It was *him*?

Bynum: And it was them, they were in *People* magazine.

Millet: Aww.

Bynum: And he was admitted and stayed with us for a *long* time right after the storm because he had lost his home. If it wasn't for his dog he would've given up, he told us.

Millet: Aw.

VanZandt: Wow.

Bynum: And we called him the seeing-eye dog so we could keep, you know—

Carroll: Hmm.

Bynum: —so we called Frisky the seeing-eye dog so that if somebody questioned—

Lundy: So that you could keep him?

Bynum: —the dog, you know, he was our seeing-eye dog.

Millet: Was he here in the hospital?

Bynum: Yeah. We would carefully, we would take, I took—we'd take him outside and let him go to the bathroom and bring him back in. We'd feed him for Mr. Mitchell.

Millet: Oh, that's great.

Bynum: And I mean it was just—

VanZandt: Looks like he served a purpose for all of you and not just him.

Bynum: He did. He made us all feel better to be able to take care of, um—

Lundy: How did he, um, help him survive? Was, did he, did he keep the dog?

Bynum: He did.

Lundy: I mean was he—

Bynum: He said the water was coming up in his house, and he got out of his house to his neighbor's house. And he got on a mattress, and him and Frisky floated on that mattress for the whole storm. And he said if it hadn't been for his dog, he would've just given up.

Millet: The dog gave him a reason to go on.

VanZandt: He was trying to keep the dog alive.

Bynum: And the dog gave him the reason to go on, and it made us feel like, you know—

Lundy: Did he show up here?

Bynum: Yeah he came here, they came here. Him and his dog came here and—

Lundy: When did he stay here?

Bynum: He—

Lundy: Did y'all just put him in a room?

Bynum: Well, we admitted him. You know, we admitted him. His doctor was one of the doctors here, Dr. Mills(?), and she admitted him, and he stayed with us on our floor, him and Frisky.

VanZandt: Did he have injuries at all or it was just a safe—

Bynum: Tired—

VanZandt: —secure place?

Bynum: —dehydrated. You know, he had health problems and he had nowhere to go. He finally found a place. I was reading in the *People* magazine last night. He's living in a retirement home here in Biloxi somewhere. It was just good—

VanZandt: What a wonderful story.

Bynum: —to see that. I mean we had, he was a celebrity. I mean him and that dog in the water. They did articles on him and they were—

VanZandt: And you probably wondered what happened to him.

Bynum: Yeah, so—

VanZandt: So now you know.

Bynum: —when I saw him in *People* last night I was just so excited. I told Rachael, I was like “Guess who was in *People*?” because you just don't, you know you don't see good stories every now and then.

Lundy: But you need that, don't you, as a nurse?

Bynum: That made us feel good that—

Lundy: You do. And the outcome.

Bynum: And the outcome. And you know, just we saw so much heartbreak after the storm.

Lundy: What stands out as, can you think of other patients you saw that still are in your mind now?

Bynum: There is. We have one and she—we took care of her mother a long time ago, Miss Joy. Her mom was with us and passed, but then Joy got sick too and she was—she came in quite frequently. Well, she was with us for the storm and after, and she passed a couple of months ago. But Joy, she wasn't old, she was fifty, sixty, she just had a battle with lungs and— but Joy would joke with me, you know. She always was *OK*, and just, you know, and I always remember Joy. And I miss her, just seeing her because her mom—it meant so much to take care of her mom and then take care of her.

Lundy: Had she any trouble after the hurricane?

Bynum: She lost everything after the hurricane, her apartment, lost everything after.

Lundy: Do you think there is, do you—you know, we count the number of deaths. You know, there was a definite period of time that we count the number of deaths attributed to the hurricane.

Bynum: Yeah.

Lundy: But we don't count those people. Do you, have you seen a difference in people that perhaps had died as a result of the stress of the hurricane, the trauma of the hurricane like that, or do—

Bynum: I have seen a lot more coming into this hospital after Katrina with so many problems.

Millet: What kinds of problems?

Bynum: Well, health problems but I mean you see a lot of depression, alcohol.

VanZandt: Which then manifests itself in physical ways.

Bynum: So many things; drugs, more suicide attempts, and you didn't see—we really didn't see that many before. See, a lot of, and a lot of young people, a lot of young people.

Millet: Young people undergoing those particular kinds of illnesses.

Bynum: Yeah, and you just, and I look at Biloxi, I look at Mississippi and I look at New Orleans. And, you know, you see so much about New Orleans, but I sometimes think they forgot about Mississippi, and Alabama, too because Mobile got it, too. I understand New Orleans was devastated, but they don't try—they didn't try and help each other. I don't think. I look at them seeing they don't try to help each other. Everybody here after that storm hit and was gone, you saw people going out helping each other. You saw us. I was here for a week, I didn't go home. I was here from Sunday till Saturday. My kids came home Wednesday and I sent them back. My kids didn't come home for a month and a half.

VanZandt: Conditions weren't good enough?

Bynum: They were with my dad in Birmingham.

Lundy: That was hard, wasn't it?

Bynum: It was hard being, it was hard lipped saying goodbye.

Lundy: It was hard to get away from them?

Bynum: That's what I said. I'm telling you, that Sunday when I came in here crying—and everybody joked with me and teased me, because I did—when I came here crying I had my Winnie the Pooh, Christopher and Bryan's Winnie the Pooh with me, my big pillow. We'd bring our air mattresses. We just bring everything from home that we need. You know, everybody brings snacks. Everybody brings—and we sleep up on the fifth floor in the CHF [Congestive Heart Failure] Clinic, and if I don't need my mattress then somebody else uses it, or we all—you know, we, it's just a big—we call it our big sleepover, our big camp.

Millet: A lot of cooperation.

Bynum: I think because we had quite a bit. That's, you know, when, um, I see other—I don't see as much recognition to the nurses that were here. I see recognitions from the, I see recognitions from the nurses that were, that came to help.

Lundy: Yes.

Bynum: But I don't think people realized the ones that had to give up their—

VanZandt: That stayed.

Bynum: That had to give up their families to come stay.

Millet: Sure.

Lundy: That's why we are doing this.

Bynum: Or the, not just nurses, the doctors, the medical personnel, everybody.

VanZandt: The ones who could've been gone and could've left with their families.

Bynum: We had to stay.

Lundy: Let me ask you this. Did you ever think about not coming that Sunday?

Bynum: Hm, yeah, I think we all did. We all talked about it. We all talked about not, but we couldn't. There's nobody to take care of patients. You can't. I can't desert my job and that's, some people say—

VanZandt: Strong sense of duty.

Bynum: —that's bad. Some people say that's bad that, you know you, I feel like—my fiancé has a hard time with that, very hard time. When a hurricane hits he knows I have to be here, and he gets very upset about that. That I don't, you know, just say forget it, and I'm, you know, but I know my kids are OK. They're taken care of. I

know he's OK and taken care of, and as long as they're out of harms way then I can do my job.

VanZandt: What are some of the good things and positive things that you felt as a result of your staying, and things that you saw that made you say I'm glad I did, I was able to do this?

Bynum: I guess, I'm not glad the storm came. It was a good experience; what happened after with everybody coming together. I mean, you saw people that in their worse times who had lost everything, came right back to work. You know, they knew they had lost things, but they came back to work. And then we lost Marge on our floor, you know, the day that she was supposed to come into work after the storm—we all, when she didn't show up, I mean, we all knew because Marge is not somebody who wouldn't just not show up. We knew if she didn't show up it's because she wasn't coming back.

Millet: She was dead.

Lundy: Did y'all talk about it that day?

Bynum: We did. You know, we said, "Marge isn't here." And we just—she lived on the beach in a first floor apartment and after a while—it was her and her husband and then her son and his family, his wife and two kids. And the wife and two kids survived, and she told us what happened that day with Marge and her husband and the son.

Millet: The surviving—

Bynum: The surviving daughter-in-law told us. So I mean when Marge didn't show up we knew something was wrong.

Lundy: She was the only nurse who died?

Bynum: She was the only nurse who died, and we lost a surgical tech, Edward—not too, circumstances, the circumstances we were talking about after storm—he had a heart, massive heart attack in the street and died.

Lundy: But you were the only unit that lost, you lost a nurse?

Bynum: We were the only ones who lost a nurse. And you know, we didn't go for counseling but we talk about it. We talked and it helped us to deal with it, and Marge, she's hardheaded. She used to be a prison, used to work in a prison.

Carroll: Hm.

Bynum: And she had that personality that just, you just couldn't—

(laughter, everyone talking at once)

Bynum: That's the way Marge was. It was this way and that was it.

Lundy: She'd seen it and done it.

Bynum: And she, you know she had enjoyed life and she loved her kids and she loved her husband and she was a great nurse. She was funny in her way and she just —

Lundy: Were y'all able to attend the funeral?

Bynum: No, we weren't. They had, I believe Marge's services were in Florida. They were originally from Florida. But we, you know, we raised money for the family and, um, we had donated a bunch of money because we were talking about getting a plaque for Marge, so we miss her. I thought about her day before yesterday thinking, well, you know I had to work with her this day. This was a day we had worked together and then the next day she, you know, Marge was home and not with us any longer. And I just, um, and my mom after the storm, my mom's a nurse too, she's a hospice coordinator for quality and she—

Millet: Where does she live?

Bynum: She lives here, too. And I didn't get in touch with her for a long time after because, you know, as soon as the storm was over with they had to find their patients and—

Lundy: That was tough, wasn't it, at home?

Bynum: And it was—yeah. And my mom, just hearing my mom's voice is what made me happy because she lives on the water. Her house sits in the, half sits in the river and half sits on land. So you know it was just one of those things. And I had people calling me, like are you OK, I mean people—I had a girl who found me that I graduated from high school with. My best friend from high school, finally she called me because she knew I lived here, and she was seeing if I was OK. I hadn't heard from her in twenty years.

VanZandt: Wow.

Bynum: So, you know, it just—it was one of those things. The aftermath, I—

Lundy: Do you think it'll ever be over? Do you feel that recovery is?

Bynum: I feel that we're recovering and it's new and it's different, but you still look out and just, you know—I still look at the old houses and—

Lundy: How about your children, are they in school or are they at home?

Bynum: Yeah, they're in school. My daughter is in eighth grade and the twins are in seventh, in second grade. And they don't really realize, Marissa does, she realizes. They had all new students coming in from—

VanZandt: That's what I've wondered, if she lost any friends or—

Bynum: She didn't lose any friends.

VanZandt: —or did they move away?

Bynum: They had a few move away but they had a whole bunch of new ones that came in, so.

(music chimes)

Bynum: New baby.

Lundy: Is that what that is?

Everyone: Awww.

Bynum: That means new baby.

(inaudible, everyone talking)

Bynum: Every time you hear that it's a new baby.

(inaudible, everyone talking, laughing)

Bynum: The aftermath, um, you hear how bad the heat was in New Orleans, how they talked about how bad the hospitals were hot and that's the way it was here, too.

VanZandt: Yeah, describe it how it was.

Bynum: It was—we lost air conditioning, and just for a day, or I can't remember—I can't even remember exactly when they brought in those portable air conditioners they brought in. But just for a day nursing was in shorts, tank tops, and flip-flops. (laughter) That's the only time you'll ever see us in shorts, tank tops, and flip-flops. I mean we were—

Lundy: You know Florence Nightingale is up there going, "Gah!"

(laughing, everyone talking, inaudible)

Bynum: It was funny, we were running around in shorts and flip-flops, and we were packing patients in ice and—

Millet: Where did the ice come from?

Bynum: Well, they got, uh, HMA trucked it in.

Millet: And they just sent ice to you?

Bynum: Ice. *Big*, there was these *big* tankers out in the back of the hospital full of ice, ice bags.

Millet: And what did you do for water, like when you needed to maybe give patients a bath in their bed?

Bynum: The first week was very sparingly, you—

Millet: Were you using bottled water like this to bathe in?

Bynum: Yes. We were lucky. I think Kim and I, the charge nurse and I, we worked a couple of days, no shower.

(laughter, everyone talking, inaudible)

Bynum: So I think it was either Wednesday or Thursday night we got a chance to leave, and we went to one of the other nurses' home. She had water and, you know, it was just wonderful. You don't realize how much—

VanZandt: Best shower you ever had.

(everyone talking, inaudible)

Bynum: The first day, the first couple of days, you know, we couldn't flush toilets so we had to, you know, we had the bags. We had our specific bedside commode with the red bags.

Millet: And for the record, the red bags are typically—?

Bynum: Biohazard bags.

Millet: Biohazard bags.

Bynum: So that's what I was saying, when you're not taught that kind of survival stuff, so we learned a lot.

VanZandt: You improvised.

Bynum: We kept patients alive.

Millet: You should write the book.

VanZandt: Yes.

Lundy: Oh, y'all need to be telling us how to teach this in nursing school. It's not just the how-to's, is it?

Bynum: It's the how-to survive.

Lundy: Yeah. It's how to survive.

Bynum: It's how to—

VanZandt: It's how mentally and—

Bynum: Mentally and—we found the laughing. We found the joking.

Lundy: And making decisions about what to do. And it's not just these how-to's and —

Bynum: We kept patients alive by giving the I.V. fluids and—

Lundy: You didn't think you'd have to pack people in ice.

Bynum: Didn't have to pack, but we did, we packed them in ice. We had to transfer a few out as soon as we could. You know we had Homeland Security here. We had National Guard here. We had FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] here. We had hospitals that HMA owned, the nurses came to help us. They were some of the nicest, wonderful nurses that, you know, you didn't realize—we didn't realize we were luckier. I talked to, I'd go to, you know, when I'd go to school there's LPN [Licensed Practical Nurse] and there's a couple of LPNs that work at Garden Park over in Gulfport. And they were, you know, they were asking us how we survived after the storm. And we were one of the lucky hospitals. Biloxi Regional actually was —

VanZandt: I wondered about that, in comparison.

(everyone talking, inaudible)

Millet: Do you know?

Bynum: Well, they were asking—they were just asking me, you know, “After the storm how did your administration handle taking care of you guys?” And I told them that they did. I said, “You know, this is what HMA did for us.” This is how—

VanZandt: They must’ve had a different experience.

Bynum: —they took care of us. They didn’t tell me that, but they definitely said that their’s wasn’t.

Lundy: That’s what, a long-term care?

Bynum: You know, you just—

Lundy: Is it? What is Garden?

Bynum: Garden Park is just an acute hospital, like this one.

Lundy: I’m mixing it up. Garden Park’s not the one behind Gulfport Memorial.

Bynum: The old Garden Park is behind Gulfport Memorial.

Lundy: That’s the one we have, USM [The University of Southern Mississippi], yeah.

Bynum: And now it’s gone. Biloxi Specialty is in with that. The other half is Biloxi Specialty because you know when they lost the one on the beach.

(inaudible)

Lundy: They sent y’all some patients, right? Biloxi Specialty?

Bynum: Right. We had specialty here, that’s what—

Lundy: But Garden Park is where now?

Millet: Wasn’t it right around the Olive Garden?

Bynum: That’s Gulf Coast Medical Center.

Millet: Oh OK, Gulf Coast Medical Center.

Bynum: Gulf Coast Medical Center is right by Olive Garden and that one I remember—I know somebody told me that they flooded and lost their roof, and they really had damage. That’s where HMH just bought out Gulf Coast Medical Center.

Lundy: So Garden Park is now where? Because this is new.

Bynum: Garden Park is on Highway 49.

Lundy: OK, that's the one that's now—is that acute care?

Bynum: That's acute care, the one on Highway 49 north of the interstate is Garden Park.

Lundy: Right. It's near the post office?

Bynum: Right. They were there.

Lundy: All right.

Millet: OK.

Bynum: And then the one that's behind Memorial that—

Lundy: That's ours.

Bynum: —you're talking about, that's yours and _____ Specialty has part of, is —

Lundy: Right.

Bynum: —renting or something part of it.

Lundy: The second floor?

Bynum: Yeah, right.

Lundy: You know, did you know that?

Millet: No.

Bynum: Yeah, Specialty, Biloxi Specialty—

Lundy: The bottom floor is where USM is, and the top floor is—

Bynum: Biloxi Specialty.

Lundy: —Biloxi Specialty. Did you know that?

Bynum: So that long-term care facility is there.

Lundy: You didn't know that. Yeah, USM is leasing out the top floor.

VanZandt: Right.

Millet: Amazing.

Bynum: Because they lost, they lost the hospital on the beach—the one that was right down the road here—so they didn't have anywhere to put their patients. And their nurses had to go, one of my friends worked for Biloxi Specialty and she's in Memphis. She just transferred to a hospital in Memphis.

Lundy: They can't have that many beds. That's a small.

Bynum: Mm-mm, they don't have that many patients right now.

Lundy: They don't?

Bynum: Mm-mm.

Lundy: And those are vent [ventilators] dependents and—

Bynum: Vent dependents, long term care.

Millet: Vent meaning ventilators?

Bynum: Yes.

Millet: Something has to breathe for them?

Lundy: Right, they can't wean them off, and they can't go home.

Bynum: Right.

Lundy: You know, they're just, it's long term.

Bynum: And they have some rehab for different things. But every nurse here was wonderful, and I think every medical person here was wonderful. We had doctors that played nurses and—

Lundy: Good for them, isn't it?

VanZandt: That's great.

Bynum: But you know our cardiologist that works with Dr. Majeure(?), she's always—she appreciates us. She just, she is, she just always appreciate us. We have no problem with that.

Lundy: When did FEMA show up? How many days?

Bynum: You know, I really can't remember. I don't know if it was the next day. I know we had people coming through the hospital. Like I said, we had FEMA, we had the National Guard.

Lundy: Yeah, what's the emergency? It's before FEMA got here. They were emergency. I can't think of, they set— did they set a tent up?

Bynum: There was—

Lundy: Outside the hospital.

Bynum: We had, now we had—

Lundy: What do you call it, the um?

Bynum: I know FEMA had—

VanZandt: Was it state, MEMA [Mississippi Emergency Management Agency]?

Bynum: MEMA?

Lundy: Unh-uh. No, it's Emergency something something. It's pre—they got here before FEMA did.

Bynum: OK.

Lundy: You know what I'm talking about?

Bynum: I think I remember which one. We had tents, yeah, we had the tents out for FEMA and then FEMA took over.

Lundy: Right, it's the, where they take over the hospital and the hospital's been— like to give some rent but.

VanZandt: OK.

Bynum: Well, actually we had, we had nursing come from other hospitals.

Lundy: And that's where the triaging—I'll ask Pam; I can't think of that. Do you know what I'm talking about?

VanZandt: I know we were talking about where Bill was mentioning all the tents set up outside.

Bynum: It was like a MASH [Mobile Army Surgical Hospital] unit.

Lundy: Right, it's like a MASH unit. They triage and that's where people just—

Bynum: We all felt like MASH units.

Millet: Where did they come from? Are they federal workers?

Lundy: It's federal, yeah, it's a federal initiative and it's like—I can't think of it.

Millet: Is it the military?

Lundy: Uh, it's kind of like an emergency response team; I think they're called FEMAT, FMAT, EMAT [Emergency Medical Assistance Team].

Bynum: Oh, AZMAT.

Lundy: AZMAT, is that it?

Bynum: No, that's, um—

Lundy: No, EMAT.

Bynum: I can't remember what it was.

Millet: We'll find out.

Lundy: But that's what happens, and then right—

Bynum: We had National Guard and Homeland Security, and we had our hospital send people and—

Lundy: Did y'all have any problem with people, you know, coming to the hospital demanding services, all this—

Millet: Lawlessness?

Lundy: Yeah.

Bynum: Uh.

Lundy: Yeah, did you have any of that, you know, people demanding drugs or anything?

Bynum: I don't think we did. I don't think we did, I mean—

Lundy: Kind of blown out of proportion.

Bynum: —I think, actually, ours was really for a disaster. I mean, we've never been through one that, a real disaster, it was very well managed. I mean, we had stuff set up downstairs for people to get tetanus shots.

Lundy: Uh-huh.

Millet: Wow.

Bynum: All the employees got theirs—if they had to have tetanus shots, and we had Cipro for—in case GI [Gastrointestinal] just, you know, if we got the GI bug that everybody was talking about.

Millet: What does Cipro do?

Bynum: Cipro is an antibiotic. It's used to treat GI, you know, an infection.

Millet: Gastrointestinal?

Bynum: Right, gastrointestinal infections and, you know, with the septic sewers and the water and all that stuff, they worried about us getting sick from the water. So they made sure we had tetanus shots and made sure we had antibiotics if we needed them. That's what I'm saying, when HMA set, when HMA that next day got in here, I mean it was just like we were just—

VanZandt: Sounds like y'all didn't skip a beat, I mean it sounds like—

Bynum: I don't think they did.

VanZandt: —you had all the medications you needed.

Bynum: I don't think they did.

VanZandt: You had the equipment.

Bynum: I mean I don't—

Millet: Food.

Bynum: I don't think HMA missed a beat for us. I think we were very well taken care of. I don't—and I look at, you know, I even, after the storm I'd ride around looking at things. I went to Pascagoula and it's devastated, too. You hear about, you know, but you look at all the Coast, all these—our hospital's sitting right on the beach and it's amazing we survived.

VanZandt: It is. It really is when you see the other buildings that have been washed away.

Bynum: It's amazing. And we look at each other, and we just thank goodness that we're—we know we're blessed. Now, that's what I want to say, we're blessed because if it hadn't have been for the Beau Rivage, the Windjammer, and Hard Rock, we wouldn't have had the protection there.

Lundy: I was going to say, yeah, it was—

VanZandt: It was like a wall of protection.

Lundy: —wall of protection.

Bynum: And I don't think I felt disconnected from everything. I think, I feel, you just get so tired of seeing it. You get tired.

Lundy: Will you be glad when this first anniversary is over?

Bynum: I said to somebody today—we were talking about when I was at school this morning—you know, you can't turn the TV on without seeing it the last week. You can't watch a show without seeing it. I mean, I read, I want to remember, but I just—I feel like I get so bombarded with having to see it every day that, you know. I just wish there was one day where there was no Katrina.

VanZandt: Yeah.

Millet: Mm-hm.

VanZandt: You hear it on the news every night, you're living it.

Millet: You need a vacation from it, just for—

Bynum: I think I do. I think you do and then you really—you see it on the news, and the people are like national news talking about it. And you hear them talking like they think they know what's going on, and you're like, "No, you don't. You don't live it every day. You're not here every day, you weren't—"

VanZandt: I bet that's frustrating.

Carroll: You keep hearing updates when you *are* the update. (laughter)

Bynum: Yeah, it's like, you know, it's like you think—

Lundy: Version 2.0.

Bynum: It's like, come down here and see us.

Lundy: From the version 6.0.

Bynum: See what we do.

VanZandt: They make it sound great.

Bynum: I mean, see what we did. We survived, and we got past it, and we're still living it, but we're going on with our lives, or trying anyways.

VanZandt: Well, you mentioned something about "that's just what nurses do." What are some of the qualities that you see, especially were evident to you during this time, that a good nurse needs to get through something like that?

Bynum: I think we separated ourselves from the storm, the day of the storm, to take care of patients. And I'm not trying to say that is—I think we separated ourselves so that we could take care of patients because we had sick, sick patients. I mean, on our floor we always have these sick patients and they're scared. And you know, I think we have compassion that I think, the nurses I work with, I keep—there's a thing on WLOX about heroes—they keep nominating and I keep wanting to nominate our nurses because, and our staff and, because we have the compassion. We, I think to be able to—the stamina that it took to keep on going, heart, because you know if you let go of your family and come to work and know that you're going to be, and know there's a Category Four or Five [hurricane] coming at you, you've got to have, you know—my heart's with nursing and always has been. I didn't know I wanted—when I became a nurse, I don't know why I became a nurse.

VanZandt: Did it have anything to do with your mother, do you think?

Bynum: I think it had more to do with my mom being a nurse and me just at the time not knowing what I wanted to do, so I became a nurse. But I've been a nurse for fourteen years so for some reason I enjoy my job and I'm going on with it, and I'm still here.

VanZandt: And what will that next step be, you're working on—

Bynum: I graduate in December with my Associate's Degree and—

VanZandt: Great.

Lundy: Congratulations.

Bynum: Thank you.

Millet: That's a major accomplishment.

Bynum: And then I'm going to go on for—and you know what I thought about? I thought about moving. I'm not going to say I don't want to, but then I would miss this place, that's all. You know, that's—I would miss this place.

VanZandt: What would you miss?

Bynum: (laughs) The people. The people I've worked with for nine years here.

Millet: We've heard people say that it's family.

Bynum: I've worked in other hospitals. I've been here twelve years, and I've worked at Ocean Springs Hospital, and I've worked in nursing homes, and I used to change jobs every two years. I've been here nine years, and I don't see myself changing and going anywhere. But after Katrina I thought about moving. You know, there's so many opportunities for nursing, everywhere. I could go to Virginia.

VanZandt: Never lack for a job.

Bynum: Yeah, I could back to Virginia and not have so much of a risk of a hurricane. But then, you know, this weekend we had the threat of that storm, and I thought to myself, *here we go again*. And I thought, you know, *OK*, and we'd been joking since right before. All of us upstairs kept saying, "You got your air mattress ready. Everybody get their coolers out." And you know, we holler, "Well, we're not going to be here for this one." But we all know we are because it's our duty.

VanZandt: I wondered that this week, particularly coming up on this one year anniversary today, with [Hurricane] Ernesto lingering.

Bynum: It was kind of ironic.

VanZandt: How did you feel? Did you all, did you all feel nervous?

Bynum: Yeah. We watched the TV all weekend. We watched the Weather Channel all weekend because we were wondering—make sure it was going, and I don't want to say I was happy it was going to Florida, but I was happy it wasn't coming this way because, like I said, "Here we go again." You have to pack everything up and make sure the kids are gone and come to the hospital and stay and leave your family. And that was my worse thing was leaving my family.

Millet: Right.

Bynum: I boohoo, like I said, every time I come in here I boohoo about my family. And we all love, I mean, I love everybody upstairs, you know. I guess you could say that if I have to leave my family, I have another family to come to and that's this one here.

Carroll: I know y'all have a lot of new nurses.

Bynum: We do.

Carroll: Are they from this local area or are a lot of new nurses from other places?

Bynum: I think a lot—I think there's a lot of them from the area. A lot of them have come here, and I don't think they realize they're going to have to stay if the hurricane comes.

Carroll: See, that's what I was wondering, if they are as apprehensive as the people who were here.

Bynum: I think they—you know what? I think they're going to be more apprehensive than I am. You know, I'm like, "OK, here we go again," that's me. Unless they're Katrina—OK, here I go saying, "Unless they're Katrina," so now, but I say, "Here we go again."

Lundy: What's Ernesto, right?

Bynum: I say here we go again. You know, Category One and Two, I don't even think I even want them to bother me anymore. But I think they are the ones that have the more apprehension now because the—

Lundy: Like you say, Katrina.

Bynum: Yeah.

Lundy: Or so heard of it.

Bynum: Heard of Katrina. They weren't here for it. Everybody will say, well, where were you? And I'll say I was right on the beach in here with a big bull's eye. (laughter) Saying, come get me. (laughter) That's what I felt like I had, a big bull's eye. But if you don't joke about it, you're not going to survive. That's what I say and that's what we all say upstairs, you know, if you can't joke about this job, you're not going to survive it.

Millet: Right.

Bynum: And I didn't ask for counseling.

Millet: Yeah, it's got twenty-two minutes left.

Bynum: I didn't ask for counseling after. I didn't. You know, I cried and I talked about it. I talked about it today. Boy, this is the most I've talked about Katrina in a

while. I talked about it today. I lost a son at two months, my very—my first child, and I learned that if you talk about things it helps. And by me talking about when he died, when I talked about his death, I was able to cope. And that's the way I think I am with this. I mean, we'll cope. I think about every person that died in that storm.

VanZandt: They say part of the healing process for PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] is to talk about it, how important that is.

Bynum: I think I can talk. I talk a lot, so. (laughter) And I do.

VanZandt: That's your therapy.

Bynum: I think it's the most I've talked about this storm because, you know, my mom was affected. She lost—she was flooded, her main part of the house wasn't, but the—and we did a lot of cleaning. Oh, river mud is just as bad as that mud in the bay so—and it was no fun to clean up. I don't like the aftermath. But then, like I said, when you ride down this beach and you knew what was here before and what's gone—it was amazing to see those casinos out on the—sitting on things. I mean, think of a storm that could pick up a casino and just—you can't imagine that weather would do that or the forces of nature would do that. You can't imagine this. What I saw in the windows the day of that storm, I couldn't imagine it doing it.

Millet: After Camille, Highway 90, part of it sank and so there would be like a six-foot difference in this lane of the highway and this lane. Did the same thing occur after Katrina?

Bynum: I think there were parts of [Highway] 90—that's why it was closed off—that were destroyed after Katrina.

Millet: Washed out.

Bynum: Yeah, there were parts of 90 that was destroyed. And that was not just here. Over in Pascagoula, over on their beach there their street, their road reroute had some road damage—destroyed, you know. So that's what I said, I didn't run down 90 until Christmas Eve, that was my first time. And I didn't just, you know, you didn't want to look at everything. And when I finally did, it's because then you'd go to the mall. I wanted to do some shopping but—I called my mom, “Mom, Mom, you will not believe what I'm looking at.” And then I started crying and I was just like, you can't believe the devastation.

Lundy: And the O'Charley's sign is still there.

Bynum: The O'Charley's sign is still there.

Lundy: I'm telling you, whatever they're making the signs out of, I mean it's just amazing.

(inaudible)

Millet: Well, it's the configuration.

Bynum: And all I could—

(inaudible)

Lundy: I know it's something like the black box of airplanes. I mean—

Bynum: After the storm—

Lundy: —what is it about the construction of these signs?

Bynum: After the storm we kept saying, "Well, no more Olive Garden, no more O'Charley's," and then just having to fight people to go places was the big thing. Having to—

VanZandt: How has that been over the past year? I know it's better now because so many things are open now, but did you find that you just wanted to get away and go to any specific places that—you know, some people say, "I just craved fast food or hamburgers" when they couldn't get food.

Bynum: Well, did you know after Katrina and after I did my duty here, (laughs) and we went to my dad's so I could see my kids; that was so nice. And the kids didn't [go] back to school till October.

Lundy: Right.

Millet: Mm-hm.

Bynum: So my dad got to spend it, he had his spending time so he got the kids. Well, we went to see him and we, you know Birmingham, everything was wide open, there were stores everywhere, you know. You just—it was nice not to have to wait in line.

Lundy: And air conditioning.

Bynum: And air conditioning, yes. Well, you know, I got my electricity back the week after the storm. The next week, the following Wednesday after the storm, my electricity was back.

Lundy: See, we in Hattiesburg—

(everyone talking)

VanZandt: That was faster than we had it.

Lundy: We were three weeks.

Bynum: Well, see my mom, my mom went to Brooklyn. They have a farm. My mom and my stepdad have a farm up in Brooklyn. So they went there and stayed, and he had a lot of trees and stuff down but I had electricity the week after.

Lundy: That's incredible.

Bynum: I came home, we came home from my dad's—that night we got home the electricity trucks were there. And I was just pleased, yeah.

(inaudible, everyone talking and laughing)

Bynum: I was just like, yeah, I got electricity. I called Keith's friend, Ziggy, and they didn't have electricity so he ended up staying with us for a couple of nights because his wife and them were over in Alabama, too. So we had all the electricity and we had everybody at our house and—

Lundy: And come on over.

Bynum: It was like it was just—

Lundy: Just sit and feel the air conditioner.

Bynum: Exactly.

Lundy: Hot water.

(everyone talking, inaudible)

Bynum: Oh we, you know, just didn't appreciate the little things, the ice, that _____ got us, the water that _____ got us.

(inaudible)

Bynum: You don't realize the things you miss until a disaster. And it's amazing that people are still living in tents. I think that is so sad. A year after the storm.

Lundy: There's still a lot of them here and—

Bynum: When I leave the hospital I have to go, I go down to the Back Bay. I go down Reynoir to IP [Imperial Palace].

Millet: Is that Imperial Palace?

Bynum: Yeah, sorry I just—I call it IP. I go down Reynoir and I just kind of look at, you know, I'd sit there and look at the stuff they're doing to the houses. You know, I always look to see what they were getting done. And there's one lot, there's these people still living in tents on this one lot, and you just—it's hard to believe people are still living in tents.

Lundy: Do you see casino workers here, or did they—do they have their own healthcare? Do they have clinics?

Bynum: No, they come here.

Lundy: They do.

Bynum: They do come here.

Lundy: Because I mean they opened up today with Beau Rivage.

Bynum: Beau Rivage, yeah.

Lundy: Did you go by there by chance?

Bynum: I have not.

Lundy: Did you see the lines?

Bynum: I did not.

(everyone talking, inaudible)

Lundy: _____ the only one that's seen the lines, I'm sorry.

Bynum: I called—

Millet: We saw them starting when we came in.

Lundy: They're across the highway. They're not in cars; they're standing in lines.

Bynum: And I called my brother because he works the surveillance there, and he was just telling me they are just packed.

Lundy: I just was wondering about the ER if there had been any. I mean, I worry as a nurse; I saw them lining up, and the police are out there.

Bynum: The workers. Well, let me tell you, yeah, we've had a lot of workers coming through, and we've had a lot of people with major illnesses—that we had a worker, construction worker came in that had liver failure and she died, young, forties, alcoholic. A lot of the workers you're seeing have, yeah, severe.

VanZandt: Are these workers, well, I wondered if they're local, but I also am curious about how many immigrants you've had. There's been such an influx of Hispanic immigrants coming to fill the void of manual labor.

Bynum: Well, that's part, a lot of them—

VanZandt: Are you treating them and seeing them?

Bynum: Yes, we are, and not just little, well, not just work-related. I mean, bad illnesses. I mean, we had one with heart failure that had an MI [Myocardial Infarction], and the young lady who had the liver failure and—I mean, we see a lot of the Hispanic workers that come through.

Lundy: Are they speaking English?

Bynum: The ones that we had did.

Lundy: Most of them cannot understand. They were not—

Bynum: They understood us. Now after the storm, we had a lot coming through the hospital. I mean, we had a lot of working on the hospital, Hispanic workers working, and you would see—I'd never seen clean floors as much I did right after Katrina because every five minutes they'd be going down the hallways. I mean, we had never had clean floors like that. I mean, our floors were always clean, but there was every five minutes, there was somebody in the hall with a mop, and I was like, "Hey guys, look how clean that floor is." But I mean, you don't appreciate those things until—I mean, we had these air-conditioning, portable air-conditioning units where they would take these big tubes and stick them out windows, the open windows, and it comes in and it comes through the machine and it cools the air to bring it into our floor. Service Master brought them.

Lundy: Yeah, they are, they're like water, they use water, they cool some over. Like swamp coolers, aren't they?

Bynum: Yeah, cool them over and that, and we, yeah. That was what—and we had one in each hallway and they helped. They cooled down what we didn't have but—

Lundy: But the water has to come.

Bynum: But the neat system was the filtration system they had in the back of the hospital for water. For a long time we had a filtration system, and they have this big,

like bladder out on the back part of the property, and tubing went down to the bay. And they were pumping water from the bay, and it would filtrate and we used it for flushing toilets, for baths and you know, bring it into the hospital.

VanZandt: I haven't heard of that being done.

Lundy: I haven't either. They used water from the bay?

Bynum: Yeah, it was this big long tube that was just going down the highway, down the road, across the road into the bay.

Millet: And that's probably something HMA did for you?

Bynum: HMA did it for us.

Millet: Yeah.

Bynum: It was something to do with, I mean, we didn't—

Lundy: Well, they could use it for flushing toilets.

Bynum: Yeah, flushing toilets. Let me tell you, that flushing toilet thing was just a bad, bad thing. (laughter)

Lundy: Well, you don't need clear water for it.

(everybody talking, inaudible)

VanZandt: We took buckets of water from our pool just to flush the toilet.

Bynum: Oh yeah, I mean, we would—

Lundy: Oh we were using the lake across the street. We used the lake. I could've cared less.

Bynum: I know it. At that point we were like—

(inaudible)

Lundy: I tell you what, whatever that's not toilet water that's been used is OK.

Bynum: And every now and then, you know, we go and we hit a toilet just to make sure we could flush it.

(laughter)

Bynum: We'd get excited. It's amazing what you get excited about. Flushing a toilet.

(laughter)

(everyone talking)

Bynum: Entertainment from flushing the toilet.

(inaudible)

VanZandt: Yeah, I'm sure the smell and the heat and the—that's just—

Bynum: It was bad. It was. But you know—

Lundy: And you're talking about hospital patients, too. Their bowel habits, talking about giving them medications.

Bynum: When you've got sick, sick patients and they're—we were all sweating.

Lundy: And the nausea just gets to them.

(inaudible)

Bynum: We were all just _____ after a while. We were like, "Eww, go away."

VanZandt: What about laundry, like the sheets and I mean all the—

Bynum: You know, I wondered about what we did. I really don't know what we did, what they did with the laundry and stuff. That part we were—we were so busy—

VanZandt: Were you changing sheets or—

Bynum: Changing patients. Well, we did; we changed the ones that *had to be changed*.

VanZandt: Right, absolutely.

Lundy: You were in the have-to mode.

(laughter)

Bynum: That's what I'm saying. We were in the survival mode. That's the thing, we were in a survival mood so—

Lundy: If it wasn't dirty, it didn't get changed. I mean, unless it was obvious.

VanZandt: But, I mean, you had extras. You did have to do that.

Bynum: Yeah, we did. But we were saying, you know, be careful with it.

VanZandt: Sure.

Bynum: I mean, we were—

Lundy: When you run out they're not going to likely be—

Bynum: In survival mode, we were putting I.V. fluids up on patients and putting catheters in patients to make sure they didn't get, you know, dehydrated, making sure they were voiding well.

Millet: So it was preventative.

Bynum: It was where you were doing what you could to make sure patients were OK.

Lundy: So you put catheters, so they weren't—oh, I see, just go ahead and put a catheter in, and so they would have to—

Bynum: We would put catheters in to monitor their intake and output because when you didn't have air, and it was so hot—I knew it was over a hundred degrees at one time. We had these little old patients that—

Lundy: Oh, and then they flash, you're talking about.

Bynum: In a heartbeat, so you know our doctors were telling us to do what we could do to keep those patients alive, and you were putting normal saline up and giving them fluids and—

Lundy: And they could only drink so much, too.

Bynum: —packing them with ice.

Lundy: And you're—

Bynum: Yeah, packing them in ice and putting catheters in to make sure that their kidneys were working, and survival is what we did those first few days. Man, that was —

Lundy: These—

VanZandt: Keeping those major organs going.

Lundy: These, well— and these little old people.

Bynum: They get dehydrated fast. It doesn't take a minute.

Lundy: It takes a minute, oh yeah.

Bynum: We had five emergencies, and we ended up sending them to ICU [Intensive Care Unit] that week. We had five emergencies that had to go to ICU and—

Lundy: And we heard you had a mom with a baby that had _____.

Bynum: The mama with a baby and *we finally*, we finally could get her off our floor. And she was a very, and I understand, new baby, she was just—and all these patients. So finally, we got to get her to the third floor and calmed her down. And we were feeding patients in the hallways, and moving from hallways, and medicines in hallways, and we were giving bed pans in the hallways and—

VanZandt: Let me ask you about that medicine because I heard a story, I can't remember where this was, but that—maybe it was Forrest General—that medication was computerized in some kind of a locked cabinet so that when the power went out they couldn't get to the medication they needed because they couldn't—it was computerized and it wouldn't dispense it and they couldn't—

Bynum: We didn't have that. We had backup generators, so—

Lundy: That could've been—

VanZandt: Well, this generator, they didn't have—

Lundy: —Forrest General because they had, I remember, their second generator failed.

VanZandt: Right.

Bynum: See, ours didn't and we, *we*—

VanZandt: That's an important thing to think about this computerized equipment, that if the power goes out and you don't have a generator, you're up the creek.

Bynum: Ours didn't do that. We ended up, we had no problems getting medicines and—

Lundy: Y'all never lost power, though.

Bynum: We, I think we lost, we lost—

Lundy: I mean you—

Bynum: —main power—

Lundy: But then you went straight to generators.

Bynum: Straight to generators. Yeah, we never lost complete, we went—once ours kicks off our generator kicks in. So we didn't any problems. I know we lost an air conditioning unit.

Lundy: Right, because the generator can't run the air-condition unit.

Bynum: But we had power. We had the secondary power.

Lundy: And the secondary power does not run—I learned that there's certain lab tests.

Bynum: Yes.

Lundy: For instance. And if the air conditioning, I'm sorry, if the temperature gets high enough you can't run certain lab tests.

Bynum: Right. We did have some difficulties doing things sometimes.

Lundy: Yes, right. You have to run in survival mode. I've learned this from interviewing nurses in Mississippi. Again, we don't know at teaching you all for anything—

Bynum: You learned. Yeah. You do learn.

Lundy: But certain, if the temperature gets high enough in laboratories, there are certain tests that can't be done.

Millet: They won't give you the correct results.

Lundy: No, the machine won't work.

Millet: Oh, the machine just won't work.

Bynum: Yeah, the machine won't, yeah.

Lundy: So, you know, if the—and you can't, because that secondary generator won't run the air conditioning units, you know, so I mean there were all kinds of, it's like a domino effect that things that, again like you say, we don't teach it because we don't know.

Bynum: We'd never been through it either, so.

Lundy: Yeah, and we're not, you know, that's med tech [medical technology]. We're nursing, but you know, if you're trying to rely on those lab tests to know what to do, you're looking at a blood test, or a urinalysis, or where the sodium potassium was, so, I mean, it's all those kinds of things. I didn't know for instance that when the generator—I've only been in one disaster where the generator kicked in, and then only it was maybe five or six hours. That's the most. Have you ever worked under—?

Bynum: Katrina was the first.

Lundy: I've only been under one generator and it's—

Bynum: And even Georges, which Georges was a—

Lundy: It did not—.

Bynum: —it wasn't bad, but, I mean it, caused, but it didn't cause damage and it didn't do like—

Lundy: Did your generator?

Bynum: I think we lost power, but then the generator, our generators have never—we've never lost a generator. I mean our old generators have always been pretty—

Lundy: How long can you, prior to this, rely on a generator?

Bynum: Not very often, barely. I mean every once in a while you have—

Lundy: For a few hours.

Bynum: A few—a severe electrical storm come and you pop, well, you'd get a generator. But I'd say Katrina was the very first massive disaster we have had.

Lundy: Well, we didn't ask you this. How long were you all on generator power?

Bynum: Oh gosh.

Lundy: We haven't even asked that.

Bynum: You know, it would kick on and it would kick off because it felt like they were teasing you. (laughter) And then—really, air conditioning power, you know, they brought in that big old air conditioning unit that FEMA finally OK'd for us. This big massive generator, air conditioning unit and they'd have it on for a little while—like they were teasing you—and then it'd go off. I mean, it was just—and it was, and we knew it wasn't, and we just, it was funny because we'd be all of a sudden excited

and the next minute depressed because of the air conditioning going back off. But, you know, you learn, and we learned, we learned a bunch. We're sure we would be ready for the next one.

Lundy: But you don't remember how long you were actually out?

Bynum: No, I don't remember.

Lundy: Like maybe a week, two weeks, longer than that maybe.

Bynum: It probably maybe was about—you know, and then they would kick our—they would kick on and we would get our main power back, and then the transformer would blow. We had a lot of problems with transformers blowing, too, all around the city, so that was one of the things. Even where I lived there was a transformer that blew out a couple of times, but—

Lundy: But it was at least a couple of weeks probably.

Bynum: Yeah, I would say that's about right. It was, it was—well, guys, it was interesting. Thank you.

Millet: Can we just ask you one last question?

Bynum: Of course.

Millet: And this is the question that we try to end with every time. Is there anything we did not ask you that you'd like to record for the record?

Bynum: No, I think I've talked about my feelings for Katrina, learned a lot, cried a lot. I had just—I think we came through it very well. I think Biloxi Regional came through it very well. I think if it wasn't for the medical staff at Biloxi Regional, it wouldn't have come out as well. I think we did the best we could in a situation that you never want to have to go through *ever*. And I would want to work with these people, if I can, the rest of my life. (laughs) Really, truly, because I depend on those people upstairs on fifth floor: Kim, Juanita, Rachael, Jackie, just, Bryan, and all of them. We were all in it together and we survived. We cried, we fussed, we snapped. Kim came back that day from seeing her house that she lost, her house the day after the storm, head-to-toe mud, crying because she'd lost everything, but her dogs were alive. There was a plus to it.

Millet: Isn't that amazing?

Bynum: I mean, you know, they were survival, you know, you may have lost everything. Everybody here, doctors lost everything, but they were here working, too. They left and they came back. You know our hospital, I remember one of the hospitals saying that they were the only hospital on the Coast that never closed their

doors, *but* that really angered us because nobody thought Biloxi Regional never closed their doors. It was open all the time and even after. We never closed. We were all here.

Millet: Well, thank you so much.

Bynum: Thank you, guys.

(end of interview)