

AN ORAL HISTORY

with

WILLIAM BARRY JONES

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi. The interview is with William Barry Jones, and is taking place on November, 14, 2005. The interviewer is Deanne Nuwer.

Nuwer: It's Monday, November 14, and I am at the home of Barry Jones. Mr. Jones survived through Hurricane Katrina, and we're going to hear about his experience. Mr. Jones, where were you born, sir?

Jones: I was born in a car on Highway 90, right out of Gulfport, but my daddy drove on to Houston right after the doctor seen me, and everything was OK. And we went to Houston where I went to [Memorial] Hermann Hospital, and so that's what's on my birth certificate. My daddy wanted me to be a Texan. (laughter) He left and went down there.

Nuwer: Right. So you grew up, most of your life, in Texas?

Jones: In Houston. Right.

Nuwer: Well, I understand that you also have a very glorious military career. When you joined the military, were you in Mississippi or in Texas?

Jones: I was in Texas, but I didn't join. My wife had me drafted. My wife *had* me drafted.

Nuwer: Had you drafted.

Jones: We were separated, and I had two kids. I wouldn't go back to her because of certain reasons. So she went, and she was really just trying to scare me. But I went down there, got mad at them, and told them, "I know what I'm talking about. Y'all can't do that to me." Ten days later, they did.

Nuwer: And you went to Vietnam?

Jones: Right.

Nuwer: How long were you in Vietnam?

Jones: Nine months, eleven days.

Nuwer: Right. Well, I know that you've received several awards. What have you received for your service in Vietnam?

Jones: What, medal-wise?

Nuwer: Yes sir.

Jones: Well, three Purple Hearts, a Bronze Star, three or four Army accommodation medals and different citations from Vietnam, you know, this and that. Quite a few.

Nuwer: Right. Well, maybe another interview will be about Vietnam.

Jones: Oh, yeah.

Nuwer: But I also know that you were working, when Katrina hit, you had been working down at the Gulfport office, I think it's called—

Jones: Three Oaks Plaza, but it's Blue Cliff College and Mississippi Tourism building.

Nuwer: Right. I knew there was two businesses in there. And can you kind of tell us a little bit, maybe back up a couple off days? You've heard this hurricane is coming—

Jones: OK. Well, I'd been in Hollywood, California. I did a script for a movie, and I was there about eight days, and then I came back, and I was excited about it, and I told Rick, my buddy, my best friend. And he said, "Barry, the hurricane's on the way." And we'd boarded this building up before, and I've stayed in the building, twice.

Nuwer: Which two hurricanes did you stay in?

Jones: [Hurricanes] Georges and Ivan. I stayed.

Nuwer: Right.

Jones: And it wasn't nothing, you know, just debris here and there and forty-mile-an-hour winds. It wasn't bad at all. So we got guitars, my music, and my barbecue pit and everything, just like we do, and going to watch movies, just like we do, videos. They got all kinds of TVs all in through the place, you know, video and computers and everything. And we just said, "Well, we'll go ahead and stick it out." And you know, we're not a hundred, two hundred yards, at the most, off the beach.

Nuwer: Right, right there in Gulfport. For those of us who don't know Gulfport, what would be the closest major road? Is it Teagarden?

Jones: Yeah, Teagarden.

Nuwer: Between Teagarden and—

Jones: Lorraine-Cowan.

Nuwer: Right, Cowan-Lorraine.

Jones: Right.

Nuwer: OK. So you're right in that area.

Jones: Right down from Outback.

Nuwer: Right. And what is Rick's last name?

Jones: Nagy(?).

Nuwer: OK. So you and Rick, you're going to wait the hurricane out.

Jones: Right. He takes care of that building; he's been working there seven years for George. He remodeled it and everything; he knows that building big time.

Nuwer: Right. So that would be George Rogers.

Jones: And he's a very loyal person to his company. And so he went and got all the plywood and started boarding. He did most of the work, but I had to run here and get the stuff, this and that, and then I helped him. We boarded it up and went in, watching TV and relaxing, drank two beers, got the barbecued steaks on. Rick didn't ever get to eat his steak. (laughter)

Nuwer: Oh no. So this would have been Sunday afternoon, y'all were—

Jones: Right, right.

Nuwer: So that's, let's see, August the twenty-eighth.

Jones: Right. I'd come back from Hollywood [California] Saturday morning, and me and him went and got some material for the building, and then went down there, and Sunday we started boarding it up.

Nuwer: And the wind started getting?

Jones: Well, it was about—I'd say it was—well, I can't believe this. The first song we ever played, "Mother Mother Ocean," the Jimmy Buffet song from [19]92 when

we first met here. Anyway, that night when we went to sleep, he wanted to play that song, “Mother Mother Ocean.” (laughter) Boy, I’m telling you the ocean knew it; going to come see us. You know. But it (inaudible) we went to sleep. And it was about five, 5:30, I woke up, and I hear the winds. And I was behind a brick wall where Rick told me to make sure to get—because it was a high brick wall—in case it did start coming through, that would help protect us. So then, we got up, boy, and we started looking, and the lights went out.

Nuwer: It was about 5:30 that Monday morning.

Jones: Five thirty, six, somewhere around there. Well, Rick had his cell phone; he had his cell phone in one hand and the guitar. I kept going back up front, peeking through the front where we boarded everything up and looking out there, waiting, you know, and I could see the winds start blowing. They started blowing, and I could see everything starting to get worse and white water coming up, not, you know, up to the steps, not up to the building yet. And Rick was on the phone with George, and we started seeing parts of ceiling tile fall, and Rick said, “Oh, man, I’m going to have a time cleaning up this place tomorrow. (laughter) You know, thinking it’s not going to be that bad. And then Rick was on the phone with George, but I went to the very front of the building, again, because I was running around, looking, had a flashlight. And then all of a sudden, it started getting daylight a little bit, and I seen the roof come off that motel next to us.

Nuwer: What’s the name of that motel? I can’t remember it, either.

Jones: Oh, I know it; I got it on the tip of my tongue—I can’t remember it.

Nuwer: Well, we’ll think of it later.

Jones: And we had to sign papers to the guy that we seen it blow off.

Nuwer: So the water had not even come up yet.

Jones: Not yet. Not yet.

Nuwer: And his roof had blown off.

Jones: His roof, wait a minute. His roof blew off, and then, right then, I said, “Oh God.” I started running back to tell Rick, and I looked. I heard a noise, and the roof we was in, part of it come off. And right when I got around the corner to go in that breezeway where Rick was at the fireplace, then water started coming up to the door. And Rick said, “George, the building’s coming apart. We probably going to lose it, too. Bye.” And hung up, you know. And I said, “Come on, Rick.” And then all of a sudden, waves started coming through, and the furniture, and one of them, a TV ran into me, knocked me down into the water, water about two feet, three feet tall, high. And it was coming in, and we didn’t know what—we was freaking out. I mean, Rick

said, "Come on. We got to get to the back of the building." You know, of that building. So we went right back around the corner and started heading back. When we got to the back, the very back, I seen this one door blow off. And then that's the first thing I seen blow off. But then we got back here, and I looked out there, and the waves, the water was getting about four feet deep. You know it was three feet deep, up to my, right up here. And then I looked, and Rick said, "We got to get on these filing cabinets." They were against the last wall. All the other walls were starting to come apart. And then I looked out there, and our two trucks were sitting, one front (inaudible) where you put them in, like a H, horseshoe. I mean like a H where we have trucks parked right between the two businesses. And we (inaudible).

Nuwer: Was that to help protect the trucks?

Jones: Yeah, to keep them. All of a sudden the lights and the horns started going off on them; the waves, and then the waves started floating [them] away. And I says, "Oh, no. There goes our trucks." So Rick, he got up on the filing cabinet, and then I got up on there. I got up; finally I was able. And I'm sixty years old; he's fifty-five, and he's more stouter than me anyway. But I was having trouble getting up there. And he kept trying to help me. Anyway, I got up on top of the filing cabinet; then we got up there and holding against the wall. We finally came against the wall, you know, that way. And Rick, he looked, and he popped the acoustical ceiling to find the roof, and then the wall starts giving. And Rick's filing cabinet goes out from under him; you know, the water takes it. And he jumps up there. And he says, "Barry, we got to get on top of that other building, on that other wall." The last wall remaining going vertically; it was in the library part of the building. But anyway, and he got up there. And I said, "Rick, I don't know if I can make it." You know, and I kept—I went to the door, to the overhead door, you know, got the door, got on top of it, and the water getting up there then, about six feet in there. So Rick—I said, "Rick, I can't make it, man." He said, "Give me your hand." So he had ahold of the (inaudible) up there, and he grabbed my hand. I said, "Rick, I can't. I can't. Let me go. I'm going to go ahead and die, drown." (crying)

Nuwer: Oh, my gosh.

Jones: And he wasn't going to let me go. He jerked me up there without me even helping. Half my body was in the water. He jerked me up; he had that extra whatever, and holding onto that, you know. He yanked me up there. So we got on the studs of the wall, and we started walking down, and we kept going back, and the water, waves were coming through there, crashing through there, just, oh, just, you know just, and the water just going all over us and stuff. And we got to the end, the very back of the building, and there were these big air ducts, big air-conditioning ducts, right? I got up on top and went that way, and he went to the one in back of me, and then I was holding on, right there on that I-beam. And then I was looking at the waves coming through, the whitecaps coming through the building. They were coming, crashing through everything. They gutted the whole building, gutting it all up. And Rick said,

“Barry, this building’s going to come down. We got to get out of here. And I was looking. I said, “Do what?” And I looked, and whew, he was gone.

Nuwer: The water pulled him out.

Jones: It sucked him right out of there. You know, he was gone. So I knew, “Oh God, he’s gone; he’s dead!” So then the air duct I was on, the other one, one of the other ones, no, mine gave loose. So then I grabbed hold of the beam, big I-beam; I’m dangling from it. The waves was coming, crashing, and there’s one more air duct about ten feet from me; it was still there, and the waves was coming, hitting it. And finally the waves knocked it loose, and I held, and I said, “I know it’s going to just crash into me and kill me, squash me into that beam.” And it went right underneath my legs. It was touching me.

Nuwer: The water was that deep.

Jones: Oh yeah, it was about sixteen feet deep, I believe. Oh yeah. It was all the way up the roof.

Nuwer: My gosh.

Jones: I mean, it was just getting there close. And then I looked, and there was nothing but the I-beams and that roof. You know, there was nothing but that left. And I’m looking, and you know, the waves coming had messed my eyes up. And I’d wipe them, you know, wipe them and watch for another wave. Then I couldn’t see nothing because waves were just—you couldn’t see out there, outside, because the waves were taking over. And then I looked at the I-beam; so I could see the vertical part, and I seen them start bending. I said, “Oh God, the building’s going to come down. I don’t want to be in this building.” I said, “Lord, take care of me. Please protect me. I’m turning loose.” I was so scared; I didn’t know what to do. You know, go out with it or die that way, or is it going to stop? And I just, “When’s it going to end?” You know. I held onto that I-beam for an hour. My watch is a Bulova. (laughter) It went through it. But I held on for an hour and then I said, “God, I’m turning loose. Please protect me, Lord.” And I let go, because I knew the building was coming down. And right after I got out, it did come down. But right when I got out of the building, it ran me into a big tree. The waves, surge took me into a tree, a big oak. I hit it, busted my nose, man, blackened. Anyway, you know, I hit it, and then I was holding it, it was like that, and then a wave come and pulled me off of it. And then I was just trying to grab anything. And then I thought it was a section of a fence got on top of me and was drowning me. I couldn’t get out, but I found out later it was the boardwalk from across—you know, it was the boardwalk.

Nuwer: It was the beach boardwalk?

Jones: Yeah, it was on top of me, and I was drowning. I was holding my breath; I was praying, you know, hard in my mind. I was trying to grab, you know; I’m

underneath the ocean, and I couldn't hold my breath no longer just about, and I kept praying, "Lord," and I found the end. And I pulled myself, and right when I pulled myself up, I got a breath. You know. I got a breath. And then right when I did, I looked and seen this van, which is, afterwards I got pictures of this van, you know; it was a government van come, choo, choo, choo, choo, choo, choo, and hit me on the head, touched me on the head, just barely touched me and went and crashed into a tree behind me. And then I said, "Oh God!" And finally I hit this one tree, that one I showed you the picture of, and I grabbed it. Now, this is something. And I kept on; it took all my clothes off. I mean it stripped me buck naked; took my shirt, everything. Shirt, everything.

Nuwer: The water was just pushing and pushing.

Jones: Yeah, and it had me. I was holding this way, and my body was going that way. And finally, after the surge, I was able to climb on that thing and hang onto it. And then my dentures, it took my dentures, too.

Nuwer: My gosh.

Jones: Oh yeah, it took my dentures; it took everything. And then I was there, and hanging on and everything, you know, and the waves kept on for three and a half hours. You know what's funny? This is kind of funny in a way; it's the only funny part I have, humorous, in my mind. It was about three hours I was on that tree, and the waves kept coming, and I know it was a tidal wave one time. I mean, Rick said he seen it, too, because I kept watching the whitecaps come in; I'd have to hold my breath when they'd go over my head, because I'd go under water for ten seconds, five seconds, you know, then I'd breathe, over and over and over. And then my eyes would get so red; I'd rub them, you know, so I'd see. You know, I kept turning my head, watching. Then I seen that one coming, and it looked like it went all the way to the sky. And I, "Oh God, this is it." And when it came, it felt like I was underwater for an hour. I mean it was so scary; it was unreal. I mean, you know, I felt like I was under there an hour. And another time I was holding my breath, and finally, the Lord really taken care of me. I'll tell you; it's something. But, and then right after that, the whitecaps were still coming, and I'm saying, "God, I'm still alive." And I felt like it was starting to slow down. And I started praying; I said, "God," I said—this is funny. I said, "Lord, don't let me die naked and no teeth." (laughter) And then I thought about it. I said, "Wait a minute. I came in the world that way; I guess I can go out." (laughter) And right after that—I am not lying—the whitecaps quit and just swells, you know, just kind of go over my head, you know, just barely. And I didn't have to—except rain was still coming down a little bit, but I didn't have to hold my breath and wait for the whitecaps to go over me. The swell, and then all of a sudden it started going down. I said, "Oh God, I've made it. I'm going to make it. I'm going to live. I know I'm going to live now." And the water started getting lower and lower and lower and lower. And then when all of a sudden, it was maybe a foot deep. I said, "Oh God, thank you, Lord. Thank you, Jesus." And then I said, "Well, I'm going to get out of this tree." And I got—and still about eighty-mile-an-hour winds, though.

And the rain, I was freezing to death. And I had caught me a piece of plastic. And then I found my shorts down there (laughter) hung on the tree. I got my shorts and put them on. And then I found my shirt, and it was pretty neat. But I didn't put my shirt on till after, but anyway, I had that plastic wrapped around me; I was so cold. And just a piece of trashy plastic debris. There was so much debris and stuff that it was just unreal. But swallowing all that water with, had everything in it. You know, Freon and all kinds of stuff, others much worse than that. It was so terrible, but then when—so then I said to myself, “Well, I'm so happy.” I said, “Now, I got to go find Rick's body.” You know.

Nuwer: Oh.

Jones: So I went and got off the tree. (crying) And I went and looked at that van that went over my head; it was about ten feet from me. And I was feeling, I was cold; man, the wind was blowing, and debris, sheeting was still flying everywhere. I got about ten feet past that van, and I heard Rick. I heard, “Barry, you're alive.” I said, “You're alive.” And he was all wrapped up, looked like a sheikh; he had this white clothing material he caught. He was all wrapped up in it, and he hit a tree. His arm was blood, all tore up, all (inaudible), but he had a tree like that and going up and down the tree, it tore his arm all up. You know?

Nuwer: So the wind was just pushing him all up and down the tree?

Jones: Yeah.

Nuwer: Oh, my gosh.

Jones: Yeah. And mine, mine was—I married that tree, too. We both married our trees. (laughter) You know what I'm saying?

Nuwer: Right.

Jones: It was just—what scared me, though, my tree, the way it was, you seen the picture. I just knew it was going to pull out, and I was going to have to find another tree. (laughter) You know, but I never did. But anyway, yeah, “Rick,” I said, “I ain't got no shoes.” He said, “Let me go find you some.” So he went, looked, started looking around a little bit for some shoes. And I said, “Rick, we got to get out of this wind.” So we seen this dumpster; I got a picture of that, too. This dumpster [was] maybe a hundred yards from us, turned over sideways. So we decided to go to it and get in it, you know, keep from—because sheet metal was flying everywhere. I mean there was stuff was flying all over the place. How we didn't get cut up, like, real bad, I don't know. I mean just my legs got it from the furniture inside the places. Anyway, then we seen our trucks. Our trucks were right in front of the other one. Mine was in front of his. I kid him about it because his got totaled out, beat all to heck and windshield busted out. Mine just had a couple of dents in it, and mine's a Chevy; his is a Ford. I said, “Man, you see what my little Chevy did to your Ford.” (laughter)

But anyway, I'm going to get my truck back, my S-10, 2002, oh, I love it, extreme. But the mud all went to the top of the seat. But I went and found my sandals in there, because I had all my clothes and everything when I came back from Hollywood, my suit, real expensive suit, and it's all ruined, gone; my script, all kinds of stuff.

Nuwer: Everything.

Jones: My Hollywood pictures with Mel Gibson, Jack Nicholson, and all these pictures of me with them. I can get them again; that's no problem. But anyway, it was just, oh, cleaning out, and I found my Bible in there. And I still got my Bible out there, muddy, I mean, just terrible. But anyway, then me and Rick went and got in the dumpster, and we sat in that dumpster, and I found a six-pack of water, you know. I don't know where it come from, but anyway a six-pack. And Rick's eyes were red, red, and mine were, too. Red, I mean *red* as can be, red, red, red; red as that shirt right there. And his was burning real bad, and I was in there. He kept looking at me; I kept looking at him. "Are we really alive?" (laughter) You know what I'm saying? We was in kind of like a state of shock. You know what I'm saying? Just not knowing, and I started to get my shit together, and then I'm thinking, you know, "God, this is a nightmare, big time." And I said to myself then, I thought, "Man, [Viet]Nam." I had a lot of thoughts about Nam while everything was going on. Everything in that building, I was flashing back to Nam *over* and over and over through that whole six hours. And then stuff, this was a lot worse than Nam to me. You know what I mean? It was so devastating, so scary, I just, I don't know. The Lord really took care of me and Rick, and he's got a purpose for us. But anyway then we got out of the—Rick, his eyes were burning real bad. He said, "Barry, my eyes are killing me." So I remembered I had some Murine in my truck." So I said, "Let me go." But I wanted a cigarette real bad. (laughter) And I had a pack of cigarettes in there. I went, and I sat in my truck and looked for that Murine, but it was so much mud, I couldn't find it. I sat there and smoked a cigarette and just started thanking the Lord, you know, praying to God, thanking him for sparing my life, and me and Rick's life. And I cried, and then all of a sudden, Rick come walking over there. And he said, "Barry, come on. Let's try to make it somewhere; go somewhere." So this is unreal; I couldn't believe this. We walked from there and seen all the devastation from the storm, you know, and still about fifty-mile-an-hour winds. And we're still, got wrapped up. And we get about halfway down Tea—what do you call it? Tea—

Nuwer: Teagarden.

Jones: Teagarden. And trees are everywhere, all over the road. And then we started seeing people, you know, coming in in trucks, power company, whatever. And nobody wanted to talk to us, it seemed like. We looked like we'd been in some barroom fights or something, all beat up, bloody; we're all cut up. And my eyes was both—I didn't know it, but they were both black. And Rick, his arm was all that way. And we looked like some bums (laughter) with a sheet on and everything. So we walked, and we finally made it to Pass Road, and so we started walking. Lorraine [Cowan Road] or Teagarden, rather, we walked, about seven miles, but I couldn't

believe this. Finally I seen a cop. I said, “All right!” And I flagged him. I said, “Man, stop, stop.” I said, “Officer, man, we got to get to the VA [Veterans Administration] Hospital. We’ve been through the storm, and we’re hurt bad.” He said, “Oh no, I can’t help you.” I said, “Well, we got to get to the hospital.” He said, “Well, y’all lived; just keep moving.” And then me and Rick—and Rick wouldn’t talk to nobody. And then I got a little farther; we got about maybe a mile, and then I seen a rescue squad and a fire department truck. I said, “All right.” And I went up to them. And Rick said, “Don’t mess with them.” He was just walking; he wanted to get to his buddy’s house. So I walked up to them, and I said, “Man, can y’all get us to the hospital? We got to get to the VA, man.” My chest was hurting so bad—I didn’t know—because I hit that tree, you know? That first one. And then, *bam*. And swallowing all that water and stuff. You know what that guy told me? I wanted to get to the VA. He said, “There ain’t no sense in you going to the VA. It’s nothing but critical.” I said, “I think I am critical.” He said, “You ain’t critical; you’re walking.” I said, “Oh, OK.” And Rick just looked back at me, and we kept going. And I even asked some people that were in a pickup truck, I asked them—I had money on me. I had my wallet still; when I found my shorts, I had my wallet in them. And I said, “Man, I’ll give you twenty dollars if you’ll just take us five miles down the road in the back of your pickup.” They wouldn’t do it. Nobody would. So we walked all the way to his friend’s house, where I bank, Whitney Bank there on Pass Road. What’s the name of that road? It’s right before you get to Walgreen’s, about a mile before you get to Walgreen’s.

Nuwer: That’s Big Lake Road.

Jones: Yeah, right there where Whitney Bank is. That’s where his buddy lives, that road. That dead-ends right to his buddy, and we went there, and man, they had open arms for us and helped us.

Nuwer: You walked about seven to ten miles.

Jones: I know; that’s what I’m saying, and nobody would help us at all.

Nuwer: And this was Monday afternoon, right after the storm.

Jones: Right after the storm, yeah.

Nuwer: My gosh.

Jones: Yeah, and wouldn’t nobody help us. And you know, it was just—

Nuwer: Well, did you finally make it to the VA?

Jones: No.

Nuwer: Never did.

Jones: Not for a week.

Nuwer: Just doctored yourself.

Jones: Yeah, them people helped us. They helped us there big time. They helped us.

Nuwer: Did you stay with that group?

Jones: Yeah, we stayed with them for a week. We couldn't get out on the telephone, and see, the bad thing, my daughter, I talked to her that night [before Katrina] and told her. And she knew the building; I said, "Baby, we're in that building." And she knew I was in that building, and then she didn't hear for five or six days. And she knew we were dead. And she said my wife and my sister-in-law, all they were talking about down there at lake house, hurry up and get to the VA so they can find out how much money they going to get out of my death. My wife, talking about it. That's terrible, isn't it? You know what I'm saying, just about my VA, my social security. That's all they talked about down there in Houston. You know, "Well, he's dead." And then she, they called up. My sister-in-law, one of them been real cool with me. She said, "Barry, they told her she'd have to have a death certificate before they'd do everything." But she was trying every way to see was she going to get the money from them.

Nuwer: Right. Well, when you-all were walking to Rick's friend's house, do you remember any specific—I know it was total devastation.

Jones: Oh yeah, just trees—I mean, you couldn't—there was places, they were coming down then trying to get debris out of the roads so they could drive down there, ambulances, emergency vehicles and stuff. They just started doing that. And you probably couldn't—you know, had to go here and go there to get down the road, get to the VA anyway. But then they kept telling us we needed to go get a shot.

Nuwer: Tetanus shot.

Jones: Yeah, and Rick finally got one from George's brother, Mike. Mike knew somebody.

Nuwer: Right. And this is George Rogers who—and then Mike Rogers are brothers, and they own the building. Right?

Jones: Right. I want to tell you something funny, what Rick (inaudible). I get him about this all the time, the telephone. When we was up on that filing cabinet, I knew we was going to die. I said, "Rick." He still had his phone; you know, when he talked to George, he still, he had it. I said, "Rick, give me your phone; I want to call my daughter and tell her goodbye." He said, "No! I ain't got enough minutes."

(laughter) Other words, he's, "I can't spare the minutes." You know. We're going to die, and the phone's going to be destroyed. He said, "I can't spare the minutes."

Nuwer: He's got his minutes. Oh, my gosh.

Jones: I told him, when I got my own—well, my phone got messed up anyway. Both our phones (inaudible).

Nuwer: Right. Well, we've got a little bit left on the tape. You walked away from death. Anything you want to—

Jones: That's my eighth time I walked away from death in my life. Three times in Vietnam, more outside, my wife (inaudible, and being run over by my own truck, this and that. And being stabbed again, and (inaudible). Just like Tom told me; he said, "Barry, you're like a cat; you have nine lives, and eight of them's gone. (laughter) You better start really watching it some."

Nuwer: Well, what an ordeal you went through.

Jones: Yeah.

Nuwer: What an ordeal.

Jones: That's right. And it goes back to my childhood days. See, I wrote my whole book about my childhood days, my mother running over me. My mother run over me when I was four years old.

Nuwer: Just accidental?

Jones: Yeah, I stole candy out of my daddy's store at four years, putting it in my boots. And she'd gone to the bank for him—the dirt driveway at the store. This was back in 1950 or [19]49, and I run out of the store because Daddy was going to get me and get all that candy. And my mother was just driving up from the bank, and I fell, and she ran over my leg. And all it did was bruise my leg because of the dirt, you know, dirt road.

Nuwer: Well, so far you've been—it's been horrible, but I cannot thank you enough for sharing this story with us.

Jones: And that's how I got the name "the Bad Man"; that was my radio name in Vietnam. And that's the name of my book, and that's what the name of the movie will be, *The Bad Man*. My daughter-in-law said, "You should name it *From the Bad Man to the Good Man*. Because I helped so many people out, you know, in church, and people. I go to the VA, help them people, vets that need it. But when Rick walked up to George, he thought that we were ghosts because he knew we were dead when he talked to Rick on the phone.

Nuwer: Because of what the building looked like.

Jones: And he ain't seen us for three days.

Nuwer: Right. And I want to make sure on tape, the building is totally gone.

Jones: Oh yeah, all the way.

Nuwer: For you-all to have made it out—

Jones: I know. It's hard for me to go back there sometimes. I mean, the first couple of times I get emotional talking to other people and showing them, especially looking at that building where I was and where it came down across from the tree, put in perspec[tive]. I tried to find my hat; I had my Vietnam hat with my original CIB [Combat Infantryman's Badge] on it, and I wanted it. And I mean I just get chills, and then I just break down sometimes looking at that building, that roof, knowing if the Lord hadn't got me to turn loose then, I'd have been under—I'd still be under that building. You know what I'm saying? I'd be one that they ain't found yet. If I hadn't turned a-loose when I did. It's just, it's the work of the Lord.

Nuwer: Well, I think that's a kind of a good ending. It's the work of the Lord.

Jones: It is. I mean the Lord has got plans for me and Rick.

Nuwer: Well, thank you Barry. Well, thank you so much for this interview.

Jones: You're welcome.

Nuwer: Thank you.

(end of interview)