Mississippi Oral History Project

Hurricane Katrina Oral History Project

An Oral History

with

Caroline and Fred Dunaway

Interviewer:  Stephanie Scull-Millet

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The oldest of five children, Caroline Dunaway was born on December 23, 1936, in Laurel, Mississippi. Her parents were Walter Cornelious Houston (related to Henry Clay and Sam Houston), and her mother was Elsie Mildred Bustin Houston. Her father owned a grocery store, a grist mill, and a barber shop, and her mother helped manage the businesses. Her family had a summer home in Long Beach, Mississippi, where Mrs. Dunaway spent many summer days playing on the beach and the surf of the Mississippi Sound. She remembers that as a child, she helped her father run the grist mill to grind corn. She attended Shady Grove High School and Jones County Junior College as well as various other schools all over the country. Mrs. Dunaway worked as a registered representative for Paine Webber and then for Mutual of New York Group; she was a member of the Top Fifty for MONY, and received many other awards while working. She retired from that in April of 2005. Her hobbies are traveling, golfing, and visiting with friends; in years past, she was a licensed private pilot. She was on the board for Tullis Manor, and she has worked many years as a volunteer for the Red Cross.

Fred Dunaway is one of a pair of twin boys; his twin, at the time of this interview, lived in Biloxi, Mississippi. Mr. Dunaway was born on January 27, 1936, in Lamison, Alabama; the family moved, and he spent much of his childhood on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, in Daphne, Alabama, where the family home was on the waterfront. He remembers that his first job was catching and selling crabs out of Mobile Bay; he sold them in his neighborhood for about fifty cents a dozen. He worked his way through college by building and repairing piers, bulkheads, and jetties along the shore in Daphne. After over twenty years in the military as a pilot, traveling throughout Europe, Mr. Dunaway retired in 1980 as a lieutenant colonel from the United States Army Aviation. Then he worked as a contract manager for Oneok Drilling in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, from which he retired in 1995.

Mr. and Mrs. Dunaway married on December 20, 1958. They have two children, Duncan Dunaway and Frances Dunaway. In 1995, they moved to Back Bay Biloxi.
Table of Contents

Childhood, Caroline, Laurel, Mississippi .............................................................. 2
Gristmill, Laurel, circa 1940s ............................................................................... 2
Long Beach, Mississippi, circa 1940s ................................................................ 3
Childhood, Fred, Daphne, Mobile Bay, Alabama .............................................. 4
Jubilee ................................................................................................................ 5, 56
Gigging for flounder ............................................................................................ 5
Hurricane Katrina experience, Back Bay Biloxi ............................................... 7
Rescuing neighbors .............................................................................................. 8
Floating cars .......................................................................................................... 9
Salvation in a dinghy ........................................................................................... 9
Encounter with a snake ....................................................................................... 11
Floating debris .................................................................................................... 12
Failure of electric prosthetic leg ........................................................................ 13
After the flood ..................................................................................................... 15
Hose to Keesler Air Force Base’s water ............................................................... 15
Post-Katrina community ...................................................................................... 16
Picking up the pieces .......................................................................................... 17
First contact with the outside world ................................................................. 18
Driving out .......................................................................................................... 19
First night after Katrina ..................................................................................... 20
Pros and cons of natural gas post-Katrina ......................................................... 21
Pleasant Reed House ......................................................................................... 22
Dunaways’ emotional attachment to Mississippi Gulf Coast ............................ 23
Community before Katrina ................................................................................. 24
Katrina fatalities in the neighborhood .............................................................. 26, 40
Demographic changes in neighborhood .......................................................... 26, 40
Caring for aging parent ..................................................................................... 26
History and description of Back Bay Biloxi neighborhood ............................. 29
Loss of boats ....................................................................................................... 29
Difficulties of rebuilding in retirement .............................................................. 31
Negotiations with insurance companies and government agencies ............. 32
Unique problems of rebuilding experienced by the impoverished ............... 32
Inconsistencies in insurance, wind versus water damage, payments ............ 33, 35
Small Business Administration loan intricacies .............................................. 33
Inconsistencies in insurance, wind versus water damage, payments ............ 35, 33
Fourth of July celebration in community pre-Katrina ...................................... 36
First Anniversary of Katrina celebration in community ................................... 37
Advocating to save the live oak trees ............................................................... 38
Oak Park Sailing Regatta, community celebration ........................................... 39
Increased property values post-Katrina ............................................................ 39
Demographic changes in neighborhood .......................................................... 40, 26
Katrina fatalities in the neighborhood .............................................................. 40, 26
Following Katrina’s path from South Africa ..................................................... 40
AN ORAL HISTORY

with

CAROLINE AND FRED DUNAWAY

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi. The interview is with Mrs. Caroline Dunaway and Mr. Fred Dunaway and is taking place on October 6, 2006. The interviewer is Stephanie Scull-Millet.

Scull-Millet: This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi, the Hurricane Katrina Oral History Project. This interview is with Mr. Fred Dunaway and Mrs. Caroline, is that correct?

Caroline Dunaway: Um-hm.

Scull-Millet: Caroline Dunaway, and it is taking place on October 6, 2006, in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. The interviewer is Stephanie Scull-Millet. And first I’d like to thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Dunaway, for taking time to talk with me today, and I’d like to get a little bit of background information, which is what we usually do. So for the record, we’ll start with you, Caroline. Tell us, please, when and where you were born.

Caroline Dunaway: I was born in north Laurel, Mississippi, on December 23, 1936.

Scull-Millet: OK. Thank you. And so now we’ll go to you, Mr. Dunaway, and ask you when and where you were born.

Fred Dunaway: I was born in Lamison, Alabama, January 27, 1936.

Scull-Millet: How do you spell Lamison?


Scull-Millet: Catherine. All right, now, I’ll go back to Caroline and ask you, for the record, to spell your name for us, please.


Scull-Millet: Thank you. And you, Mr. Dunaway.

Scull-Millet: All right. Thank you. Thank you so much. Normally what we do in an interview is just ask you a little bit about the years that you were growing up, maybe something you remember. And one reason we do that is to kind of settle into the interview and kind of find our feet for the interview, but also, in years to come, what seems very ordinary to us now, won’t be ordinary at all, and it will have value in that respect, also. So if you can, just search into your memory and share with us something about your early days.

Caroline Dunaway: I was the oldest of five children, and I was eight years old when my sister next to me was born. And we lived—my father had a grocery store, and he also had a gristmill, service station, and a barber shop. And we had horses; I rode horses a lot. And my father was very active in the community. He was president of the booster club at the high school, Shady Grove High School. Shady Grove is a little village, really, on the north side of Laurel on Highway 15 North. And I had a great childhood. My family had a summer home in Long Beach, [Mississippi], and we came to the Coast every summer. And I learned to love the Coast during that time. My dad made us what we called skimmers; they were just round Masonite boards. And we’d throw them on the waves, what little waves we have on a Gulf Coast beach, and we’d ride those in like they were surfboards. Although I’d never heard of a surfboard at that time. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Well, for the record, can you just explain a little bit what a gristmill is.

Caroline Dunaway: Well, my father had taken the watermill rocks—the top rock weighed 300 pounds, and the bottom rock weighed 500 pounds—and he put a shaft through it and motorized it, and the farmers would bring their corn from their crops. And we would grind either cornmeal or grits or hominy, whatever they wanted us to grind. You could lift the upper rock; it had a round handle. Really, it came from a train, where you switched the tracks on a train track. And that’s what we would lift or lower the rocks for and grind the corn. That was my job. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: And the distance between—

Caroline Dunaway: —would make it either fine cornmeal, or if you wanted coarse cornmeal, you raised it a little bit. And if you wanted grits, you know, you lowered it. You know, you could make whatever the farmer wanted. If they just wanted it to feed their cattle, then I’d put it on a different level for them. It was fun. My father had Houston’s Home-Ground Cornmeal. And he took a concrete mixer, a new one, of course, and we would put the ingredients in to make self-rising. And we’d deliver it all over town. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Wow. And the concrete mixer mixed the—

Caroline Dunaway: —ingredients of baking powder, soda, salt and all in with the cornmeal.
Scull-Millet: I wonder if he ever tried to build anything with it. (laughter) And tell us a little bit about what Long Beach was like when you were growing up. I’m sure it’s very different now. Any descriptive—

Caroline Dunaway: Well, my dad would never let us come to Biloxi. (laughter) And we mostly just stayed on the beach; we’d play volleyball, and you know, there were a group of kids that lived down there. We lived on that street, Beach Boulevard, where Mississippi Southern is now. And there was a little house just on the north side of the railroad tracks where my parents’ house was. And we just spent the whole summer on the beach, you know, us kids.

Scull-Millet: So there was already a sand beach there.

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

Scull-Millet: And the sea wall was there.

Caroline Dunaway: Um-hm.

Scull-Millet: What was Highway 90 like then?

Caroline Dunaway: Well, of course, there was no [Interstate] Highway 10. And Highway 90 had traffic, but not anywhere near—I mean, my mother never worried about us crossing Highway 90 to go play on the beach, put it that way. The traffic was so scarce, you know, when we were young and growing up down there.

Scull-Millet: Do you find there’s a difference in the clarity of the water now compared to when you were a child?

Caroline Dunaway: You know, I don’t know that I even noticed. I know we swam an awful lot in the summers when we were down there. We just literally lived in the water.

Scull-Millet: Any encounters with wildlife?

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, yeah, sometimes there were stingrays out there, and in August you didn’t dare go in because of the stinging nettles that would come in real close. And we’d go floundering at night.

Scull-Millet: How do you do that? Tell me about floundering.

Caroline Dunaway: Let Fred tell you about floundering. He’s the flounder man.

Scull-Millet: All right, we’ll have Fred give us a little exposé on floundering. Well, let’s move to you, Fred, then. Can you tell me a little bit about your growing up years?
Fred Dunaway: Well, like I said earlier, I was born in Lamison, Alabama. My mother had twin boys; I’m a twin. And when we were about—well, in the early [19]40s, my father got a job in Mobile, Alabama, so we moved to Mobile. And then we eventually ended up in Daphne, Alabama, where my brother and I grew up. And, you know, we had waterfront property. And my first job was selling crabs. We used to sell crabs to the neighbors, and I think we would charge about 50 cents a dozen back then. And then as we grew older, we went in to the—to work our way through college, we went into the pier/jetty/bulkhead business, and we built and repaired piers along the shore there in Daphne.

Scull-Millet: Is that the shore of the Gulf of Mexico?

Fred Dunaway: That’s Mobile Bay.

Scull-Millet: Mobile Bay.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, uh-huh, on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay.

Scull-Millet: OK. And you said you worked your way through college with—

Fred Dunaway: Building bulkheads and jetties and—

Caroline Dunaway: —piers.

Fred Dunaway: Piers along the eastern shore of Mobile Bay.

Scull-Millet: And what is a bulkhead?

Fred Dunaway: A bulkhead is a retaining wall that you put out in front to keep your soil from washing away by the tide or by the waves.

Scull-Millet: What is it made of?

Fred Dunaway: It was made out of creosote piles and timber back then. Of course that’s illegal now. Most of them are made with another treated material, but they’re turning to the synthetics now, too. So they’re much stronger, and they last forever.

Scull-Millet: Where did you learn to do that?

Fred Dunaway: Well, we had our own waterfront property there, and my dad would build piers and jetties and show us how to do it. And then we started, when we got old enough, when we were old enough to work, we just went up and down the beach there, and everybody needed some work done. So that’s what we did. We loved the water; so that kept us near the water, too.
Scull-Millet: Um-hm. And what did your father do?

Fred Dunaway: He worked for, it was called Hollingsworth and Whitney Paper Company then— it was bought out by Scott Paper— but he would drive from Daphne to Mobile every morning and every afternoon.

Scull-Millet: OK. There are two things I want you to tell me about. One is the Jubilees, and the other is floundering.

Fred Dunaway: OK. Well, they converge. Jubilee is a phenomenon that happens in very few places in the world, but the eastern shore of Mobile Bay is probably one of the most famous. In the late fall, when the conditions are right, it’s a result of the salt water and freshwater. Five rivers run into Mobile Bay, and when that salt water and freshwater merge, then it causes all the fish to want to climb out on the shore. (laughter) And it’s called a Jubilee. And it’s incredible; you could go down there with nets, shovels, or whatever, and just scoop up this seafood. And they used to be very plentiful Jubilees back then. They don’t have quite as many, but they still have one or two every year. It’s just along that certain area of Mobile Bay there. And when you don’t have a Jubilee, then you can go out with a lantern at night floundering. And of course the flounders come up in the shallow water at night, and you can spot them and have a gig, and you can gig them.

Scull-Millet: What is a gig?

Fred Dunaway: A gig is a stick with a sharp probe on the bottom; it can be a nail, or you can buy a manufactured gig these days. We made our own back then. And when you’d gig a flounder, you couldn’t pull him out of the water. You’d have to reach down underneath him and grab the gig, and then pull the flounder and the gig all out together because if you pull the gig out, then the flounder will run off, even though he’s got a hole in him.

Scull-Millet: There’s so much vacuum underneath that—

Fred Dunaway: Well, if the gig doesn’t have a barb—they started making them with a barb, you know, when you’d go in, and with the barb, you could pull him out. We didn’t have a barb, so you had to get your hand under there, or he would slip off the gig back into the water.

Scull-Millet: Um-hm. How did you make a gig?

Fred Dunaway: We normally took a broom handle or an old hoe handle or something and just drove a nail in it, then sharpened the end of it. And that’s all you needed.

Scull-Millet: Um-hm. So you’d have a lantern. How did you know when there was a flounder? I thought they could really get the sand on top of themselves.
Fred Dunaway: They do. You have to be—it’s a skill, but if you’ve done it long enough, you can spot them. And you see the bare shape of them. Of course, you gig a lot of things you think are flounders that are not. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Like what?

Fred Dunaway: Well, just the shape of a board or something, you know. But you just gig everything, and finally you get yourself a flounder.

Scull-Millet: Stingray, maybe?

Fred Dunaway: Oh, yeah, a stingray. The thing about those Jubilees, they weren’t just restricted to edible seafood. Everything came up, eels and the stingrays, and nettles. So you’d get a hodgepodge. You’d have to watch out for snakes. You know, everything was in there.

Scull-Millet: Wow, snakes. Sea snakes, or snakes that didn’t want to be there?

Fred Dunaway: They were just part of—they probably came from the shore, trying to get their share of the food, too.

Scull-Millet: Oh, right, right. Yeah.

Fred Dunaway: You just had to be careful. Of course, a lot of areas over there on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, the woods go right up by the water, so it’s easy for these creatures to get out into the Bay.

Scull-Millet: Um-hm. And the saltwater fish are irritated by the freshwater coming in?

Fred Dunaway: Yes. And there’s a lot of different people that tell it different ways, but I think the popular theory is that oxygen is taken from the saltwater by the freshwater. They try to get out on the shore so they can breathe.

Scull-Millet: Very interesting. Well, because we’re a little pressed for time, because I can’t keep you here for five or six hours, I think we’re going to jump to Hurricane Katrina. We’ll just narrow it down, and I know that we have some questions that I sent you, which I’d like to come back to, but first I think I’d like to just ask the two of you to tell me about your Hurricane Katrina experience, just in your words, the way you remember it.

Fred Dunaway: You want me to start?

Caroline Dunaway: Um-hm.
Fred Dunaway: Well, a lot of people after the storm asked us why we stayed, and since we moved there in [19]87— I’m sorry, we bought the place in [19]87, moved there in [19]95. And since we were there we had seen seven or eight hurricanes, and we stayed there. And we heard about Camille, which was the ultimate hurricane at the time. And the house that we bought was not affected by any of these storms, no water. So we felt comfortable, and I always told Caroline, if we stayed during these hurricanes, then we were there to repair stuff as it happened. You know, if the protective covers over the windows were damaged, then we could get out there and repair them. And also if the roof leaked, you could get in and do that. And that happened on several occasions we were there. But this Hurricane Katrina, we were going to stay, and our whole neighborhood stayed, practically everybody. And of course, we’d never seen the water get that high. And then there was a no-go moment that you can’t go anywhere; you’re just destined to stay there.

Scull-Millet: You’re committed.

Fred Dunaway: That’s right; you’re committed. And we often thought during that storm, “Had we made the right decision?” So anyway, we stayed in our house, and the water finally got up to coming in the front door over the floors, and we always had a plan of what we would do if it got too bad. And on previous hurricanes—our friend across the street, immediately across the street, lives in a solid concrete house; the walls are a foot thick. Some German back in the early [19]50s built this house, and he called it a hurricane house. He built it just for that.

Caroline Dunaway: Even the roof was concrete.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. So we always felt like we could go over there, which we did.

Caroline Dunaway: (Inaudible) would be all right, you know?

Scull-Millet: Right.

Fred Dunaway: And then after a while, the water got up about a foot in the house, and I waded over from our neighbor’s house and looked out through the peephole that I had dug in my hurricane shutters, and there was a sailboat just about three feet from the front of the house.

Scull-Millet: Your house or the concrete house?

Fred Dunaway: Our house. Our house was a protective barrier for the concrete house. You see, he was back off the beach, off the waterfront, and we were right on the edge. So it kind of protected the other houses back in that area; all those beachfront houses were kind of protected.

Caroline Dunaway: Our house was fifteen feet above mean tide, high tide.
Scull-Millet: We’re talking about the Back Bay of Biloxi.

Caroline Dunaway: Yes.

Fred Dunaway: So then after I saw the sailboat, I rushed back, and we could look out the window, and I took some pictures occasionally of the water rising; got on up to the middle of the windows and just literally watched our house come apart.

Scull-Millet: And you’re wading around inside the house?

Fred Dunaway: Yes, we were wading. The concrete house did fine, but the windows and doors collapsed when the water got up to a certain area. And all the doors collapsed at the same time. It’s like you took a truck and chained them and pulled them all off at once. They broke down; the house filled up with water, and we got some people. We went around, just probably the worst part, and picked up some people in boats, neighbors of ours, especially some old people, four people in a little eight-foot skiff, and Caroline hung onto them a couple of hours, through the door. They were in the backyard, and we just had them right up against the house under the eave.

Caroline Dunaway: The trees were falling; you know, limbs were falling, and trees were falling. And it was really bad gusting winds. I mean, the wind would just knock you over.

Scull-Millet: Knock you over.

Caroline Dunaway: Right. I realized when the water was about up to our ankles, I guess, over at our house, and I realized that my neighbors were home. They’re eighty-five, Art and Doris Delano(?). And I went running over to their house, and she still had her gown on. And they hadn’t even put their storm shutters down. And they were just watching the wind. The wind would come, big gusts of wind, and it would just blow a wave, you know. And it was just coming in over their pier. And I couldn’t get her to get dressed; so I finally just went and got her clothes and virtually helped her get dressed. And Danny Gwin(?) across the street came in; he saw me go over there. And we put them in their car and drove them across the street because they walked so slow, they’d never make it. And the water by then was up in the street a little.

Scull-Millet: Was it coming in the car?

Caroline Dunaway: No.

Scull-Millet: Not yet.

Caroline Dunaway: No, it wasn’t that high.

Scull-Millet: Not yet. OK.
Caroline Dunaway: And so we took them over in their car and got them into the concrete house, and the concrete house belonged to Mr. Forrest Hearn(?), and he’s a one-legged man. So my husband and son, Hunter, and Danny Gwin and a couple of other young people, younger men that lived on our street, they went and collected up the people that, as he said, couldn’t swim, and they put them in our eight-foot dinghy that Fred had tied to a tree. And they’d gone and gotten it; they were wading in water up to their knees by this point.

Scull-Millet: Right. Was the water moving?

Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Caroline Dunaway: The wind gusts would—

Scull-Millet: You could feel a current?

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, everything was going down the street at this time or around the house and into the house. Yeah, I had pulled my boat up beside the house, and I saw it drifting down the street, so I waded out and got it. I said, “We just might need this.” And I tied it to the back of the house. We really needed it later on. So, but when the water got above the cars, the cars all floated down the street. We’d had five parked in our yard; they all floated down till one of them caught the fence, and they were all piled up against the fence there. And it was weird because two or three of the cars had alarms in them, and the alarms were going out, and it was like they were hollering for help, you know. (laughter) All the alarms were going off.

Caroline Dunaway: And we had our dog. We had our dog; he’s an Australian cattle dog and weighs about sixty-five pounds. And I was worried about him. My neighbor had a little boat with a glass top on it, and it was his coffee table. And that floated for a while; we put the dog in there. He’s a good swimmer, but I was more worried about him than about myself (laughter) during the storm. So my son and Fred got ladders, and they put him up in the attic in that concrete house.

Scull-Millet: In the concrete house.

Caroline Dunaway: So after he was safe, then we started to worrying; I started to worrying more about the older couple and the one-legged friend that was there. And I had a little friend; her name is Mimi, and she’s Vietnamese. She couldn’t swim; so the four of them were in the dinghy. And the wind gusts, you know, trees were falling. So I just held onto the dinghy and held them underneath and held onto the door frame and held them underneath the roof of the house.

Scull-Millet: Could you feel the current try to pull the dinghy away?

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, yeah.
Scull-Millet: How long do you think you had to hold it?

Caroline Dunaway: Two hours.

Fred Dunaway: The outside view, it was weird because the water was nasty, and there was stuff going around—

Caroline Dunaway: Snakes.

Fred Dunaway: —your ankles and your legs and everything. And it looked like the water wasn’t going to stop. I kept putting a black mark at the water level inside of the house, and I’d watch it. And when it disappeared, I’d put another one. And I said, “When you start seeing those black marks, you’ll know the water’s going down.” So it dawned on me that we were all going to get real wet. So I put my billfold, and I put the dog in the attic; I put my billfold in the attic. I went around and took some pictures, and then I put the camera in the attic. And that’s the only thing that survived. Caroline’s cell phone got wet, and it was gone.

Caroline Dunaway: I put my purse in the dinghy with the folks; it got wet, but it was fine. You know, I at least had my identifications and all.

Scull-Millet: Right.

Fred Dunaway: If I had known then what I know now, I’d have been in my house two days earlier, putting everything in the attic, (laughter) you know, because everything in the attic was safe, dry. But anyway, that was quite an experience.

Scull-Millet: How did you get into the attic? Did you have to—were there stairs? Was there a ladder?

Fred Dunaway: No, we had a stepladder. We had to—if it would have had a ladder, it wouldn’t have bothered me because we could have gotten everybody up there. But the stepladder, somebody had to hold the ladder to keep it from washing away. So when it peaked, we didn’t know when it peaked; we didn’t know it was at its peak. My son had gone to the house next door and started removing the screens, because our plan was to put everybody in the boat and take them over to this two-story house because we didn’t want to get trapped in this concrete house if the water had not gone down. So they were over there, and we were worried because they were friends of ours, whether they would mind if we tore the windows out. (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: The water did that anyway, so.

Scull-Millet: So you removed the screens in the second floor, thinking, “If we get that high in the water”—
Fred Dunaway: Yes, if we could get that high in the water, we could go in through the window. Yeah. And when I was out helping Caroline with the boat, there was a lot of trash that was circling around, coming in. And I’ll never forget this sheet of plywood that was trapped between the boat and the house. And it had a snake on it. And I kept looking at Caroline, and I didn’t want to point that out.

Caroline Dunaway: I saw it. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: And the people in the boat, well, I was thinking, “If I show them that snake, they going to probably want to get out of that boat.” So we all rode it out with the snake, and finally I looked later, and he was gone.

Caroline Dunaway: He was trying to survive, too.

Fred Dunaway: Well, I was trying to push the board out of there.

Caroline Dunaway: But all the furniture kept banging into me every time a gush of water would come through. He had a roll-top oak desk, and my whole side was black and blue.

Scull-Millet: Um-hm, because this roll-top desk kept pushing against you.

Caroline Dunaway: Banging into me.

Scull-Millet: Actually impacting.

Caroline Dunaway: And the doors all came off over at his house; the windows came off, and it was just a mess. And it was black, yucky water.

Fred Dunaway: We took everybody’s belts off and made a strap so we could tie the boat to the house. We didn’t have anything to tie it to, so we had to have something big enough to go between the door and the window, and then tied it off that way because Caroline was getting—you know, she had hung onto that boat long enough.

Scull-Millet: Two hours, that’s a long time.

Caroline Dunaway: I was holding onto the door frame, you know, and holding them under [the eave], and Doris was sitting there. She’s eighty-five, and she got this terrible look on her face. And I said, “Doris, what’s the matter?” And she said, “I’m seasick.” (laughter) So we had to deal with that, too.

Scull-Millet: Right. What was the temperature like?

Caroline Dunaway: It was hot.

Fred Dunaway: Yes.
Caroline Dunaway: It was very hot.

Scull-Millet: The water didn’t cool you off and make you uncomfortable?

Fred Dunaway: No, it didn’t bother us at all.

Caroline Dunaway: I didn’t even think about it, to tell you the truth, whether it was hot or cold. You know, it was just a matter of survival.

Fred Dunaway: And it was nasty.

Caroline Dunaway: It was very nasty.

Fred Dunaway: And a lot of damage was done by barriers floating in the water, like that sailboat and trees and piers and—

Caroline Dunaway: —furniture.

Fred Dunaway: Our deck, one of our decks was in the living room, and it had torn out the whole back end of the house and floated inside and was trapped in there. And later on when I removed our mattress, I had to cut it up in four pieces because it was so waterlogged we couldn’t pick it up. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Too heavy.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, it was too heavy.

Scull-Millet: Right. Well, how to do you cut up a mattress? What do you use?

Fred Dunaway: You use (inaudible) we call them, cutters. First you cut the mattress away with a knife, and then when you run into something, you just have to cut it with (inaudible) or pliers or something like that. We used a saw to cut some, hacksaw, but it’s no telling what that mattress weighed, sopping wet.

Caroline Dunaway: Nobody was panicked, though. No one was crying or upset; you know, it was just a matter of, “What do we do?” You know, “We’ve got to stay strong and get us out of this.”

Fred Dunaway: My neighbor, it’s funny; Mr. Hearn was irritated because we were tracking mud in his house, (laughter) and then he said, “If you’d throw some towels down around there in front of that door, it would keep water from coming in here. (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: And then pretty soon we had five feet of water in there. (laughter)
Fred Dunaway: And he was beyond himself then.

Caroline Dunaway: But his house was eighteen feet above the mean tide level, and water was five feet higher than that. So you know, we had a good twenty-eight feet of water that came through there.

Scull-Millet: How high did it get in your house, when you measured it?

Caroline Dunaway: My house? Ten feet.

Scull-Millet: Ten feet. Ten feet! You’re not ten feet tall. How did you—

Fred Dunaway: We have ten foot ceilings, and the water got, with the waves—you know, there were waves on the beach side. So by the time they got through our house, and got to us on the back street, there were no waves; there was just high water. So it was coming, knocking all the blades off the ceiling fans and all the pictures were gone. But it didn’t get ten feet where we were because it was all settled out.

Caroline Dunaway: It got up to my neck, and I’m five foot, three inches.

Scull-Millet: You were so lucky.

Fred Dunaway: Oh, yeah, we were. We were wondering, you know, “What’s going to happen next?” (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Did you think at any time, “We could die here”?

Caroline Dunaway: No, it never crossed my mind.

Fred Dunaway: I was worried about the people in the boat, the old people. And Forrest Hearn, he had a prosthesis, which is one of those high-tech [prostheses], and it got salt water—

(brief interruption)

Scull-Millet: So he had a prosthetic leg. From the photograph, I think I remember—was he missing his knee, or was it a below-the-knee [amputation]?

Fred Dunaway: It was above the knee.

Scull-Millet: Above the knee.

Fred Dunaway: And it was one of these high-tech things that he charges it up every night, and it keeps rhythm with his other leg when he’s walking. But if he’d had to
leave the boat, I don’t know how he would have handled it; so I was kind of concerned
about keeping, make sure they all stayed in the boat.

**Caroline Dunaway:** They’d pick him up to put him in the boat, and his leg would go,
plunk.

**Fred Dunaway:** He couldn’t bend the knee, you know. Every time you’d pick up
Forrest, somebody’d say, “Watch that leg.” And it would come up out of the water.
(laughter)

**Scull-Millet:** It was like a loose cannon.

**Caroline Dunaway:** We were laughing. (laughter)

**Fred Dunaway:** Watch the leg.

**Scull-Millet:** They call it gallows humor, don’t they?

**Fred Dunaway:** Yes, right. Things like that kept us going.

**Scull-Millet:** That’s amazing. So why did the dinghy not sink? It was getting water
in it, wasn’t it?

**Fred Dunaway:** We had bailers. Mimi, the Vietnamese lady, was continually
bailing, but it was under the eave. And the worst part is when we first got the boat and
put them in there, it was filling up with water rapidly, and I discovered that the plug
was out. You know, it has a plug. So one of the old guys said, “Well, I can put my
toe in there.” (laughter) And I said, “Well, thank you, but no thanks.” I finally felt
around in there, and I found the plug under the seat, and I got it in there. And then
they spent fifteen, twenty minutes bailing that water out. And then it stayed pretty dry
in there after that. But I was thinking, “If we don’t have a plug, man, this is hopeless.”
But we found it.

**Scull-Millet:** What do you think was the duration for you?

**Caroline Dunaway:** It was two hours.

**Fred Dunaway:** The panic part was two hours. You know, we kept wondering,
“When is this water going to stop?” And then we knew we had a problem. And then
when the cars started to all bumping together and were whining and hollering, the
horns going off and drifting down the street, we didn’t know. We didn’t want to get
away from that house because there was protection. If we tried to travel to the house
next door, it was going to be a struggle because there’s a fence in there, and it was
underwater. But when I looked up and saw the black line, I knew the water was going
down. It had covered it up, and then I said, “I think we’re over it.” And I’m telling
you, when it started going out of there, forty-five minutes later, we were walking on mud again.

**Scull-Millet:** Good heavens.

**Caroline Dunaway:** The mud was up to our ankles; I lost my shoes. So I had on one—we found some shoes of his out in the street. And I had on each of his. He wears a ten, and I wear a seven. (laughter) So I was rumpling around in his two odd-matching shoes.

**Fred Dunaway:** Then the other problems, we had to have power. You know, there was no power, and we didn’t have any gasoline.

**Caroline Dunaway:** Well, we ended up, by that time—thank goodness all this happened during the daylight hours. I don’t know what we would have done, had it been dark. But when the water receded, my son and the other young men went up and down the street to see who needed help. And there was one couple that were up on their roof. She had just recently had surgery, and a big pier had just come through their whole house. And they lived on the opposite side of the road from the beach. And they brought them down. We went to Danny Gwin’s house, the house next-door to the concrete house, and his house is up about four feet higher, but he still had four feet of water in it. And so the water had gone out of his house, and we just took push-brooms and tried to push the muck out of there. And we got the older people over there. And he had a gas stove. And I cooked for us, and we just took food that was in his upper cabinets down, and that’s what we ate for the next three days, whatever we could find up there. And we found out that Keesler Air Force Base had some housing that was behind, you know, two streets over.

**Fred Dunaway:** They’re on a separate water system over there; they had their own water system. And I noticed that one of their spigots was broken. We had no water. So we gathered up every hose we could find in everybody’s yard, and we ran the longest (laughter) hose line, crossed into Keesler, and tapped into one of their spigots and ran it all the way back. And it was out in the street, and anybody that came along could use it.

**Caroline Dunaway:** We took our showers. (laughter)

**Fred Dunaway:** And I took a bag that was dry, and I wrote Keesler. It was a friend of mine, General Lord(?) [who] was the commander there. And I told him we were borrowing his water. (laughter) I was trying to be funny, and I said, “By the way, we’re doing fine. If you guys need help over here, just let us know.” (laughter) And I took it, and there was a security guard walking the perimeter, and I asked him to give it to him. I don’t know if he ever got it or not.

**Caroline Dunaway:** We never heard from him about it.
Scull-Millet: Did he make it through the storm? Do you know?

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, yeah.

Fred Dunaway: Oh, yeah, he made it. He had his own problems at Keesler.

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, Keesler had a lot of problems.

Fred Dunaway: They were covered up with water, too.

Scull-Millet: Well, what kinds of injuries did you have among you in your little community, now? You and the neighbors are suddenly in a different relationship. You’re closer-knit together.

Fred Dunaway: Oh, yeah, it was tremendous.

Caroline Dunaway: We had fourteen people that stayed at Danny Gwin’s house that night. And his beds were wet, but you know, the chairs we dried out the best we could. We’d gotten the towels, and he had new blankets that his wife had just bought. And we wrapped up the older people and got them in there sitting up in chairs that we had dried off, leather chairs, thank goodness. And you know, we were cozy.

Fred Dunaway: You were talking about injuries. Everybody had the normal cuts and scratches, but Art DeLanderman (?) was the old—

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, the eighty-five-year-old man that we had gone over and gotten. And he insisted on going back to his house. This was the next day, wasn’t it?

Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, it was the next day. And we didn’t want him to go over there, but he was bound and determined, and he didn’t come back and didn’t come back, and finally we went over to check on him. And he had fallen and had cut his leg pretty badly, and we were worried about that because we didn’t have any medications. So we washed it as best we could with clean water and soap, really.

Fred Dunaway: But two weeks later, Art and Doris Delano (?) these two older people, they packed up and went to live with their son in Atlanta, and she passed away right after she got up there.

Caroline Dunaway: It’s her son; he lives in Baltimore.


Caroline Dunaway: And she passed away about a month after the storm.
Scull-Millet: Any idea if it’s stress related?

Fred Dunaway: Oh, I’ll always say that’s what she was—

Caroline Dunaway: They had traveled all over the world. He worked for (inaudible). And they were like us; you know, we traveled a lot because of Fred’s military. And they had mementos from every place. And, you know, their whole life, as well as ours, was taken away.

Fred Dunaway: They had the largest Hummel collection I’ve ever seen. And he said he got the maximum insurance for that. And I said, “How much was it?” He said it was a hundred thousand dollars. So you know how big the Hummel (laughter) collection was. And they were out days and days picking up pieces of that stuff. It was just stuff like that that you’d never replace.

Caroline Dunaway: To me the worst part after the storm was going through the muck and trying to find any little memento of ours, and most of it we found four doors down from our house. The water, you know, the wind had just pushed the water that way and had taken all of our stuff with it.

Scull-Millet: You said most of it you found. By that, do you mean you found most of it, or most of what you found?

Caroline Dunaway: No, most of what we found were there. We had about, maybe, six containers. This vase here, our maid in Germany gave it to me, and it doesn’t even have a scratch on it.

Scull-Millet: Amazing.

Fred Dunaway: Well, it’s got a few on the bottom. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Amazing.

Caroline Dunaway: These decanters here I had, and even the tops were still there. This whole set was in my dining room.

Scull-Millet: Good grief. They’re so delicate; they’re glass, very delicate.

Fred Dunaway: And right next to them might be some big, old jug broken all to pieces. You wonder what’s going on.

Caroline Dunaway: I have a huge Fostoria punch bowl, and it was just sitting out in the front yard like we’d just had a party. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Hard to understand, really. You know, I’ve heard other people talk about this.
Caroline Dunaway: We had two pieces of furniture that we can redo. One is a hall tree, an oak hall tree that a friend of mine gave to me. And another was a rosewood coffee table that we can refinish, those two. And other than that, we had an antique Frances Bacon player piano. What did it weigh, Fred?

Fred Dunaway: Oh, probably 250 pounds.

Caroline Dunaway: And we didn’t find a piece of it.

Scull-Millet: Gone.

Caroline Dunaway: Um-hm.

Fred Dunaway: And another interesting highlight: about ten days later the press was walking down the street with their cameras interviewing people, and after they interviewed, I was talking to one of the ladies, and I was kicking through the—we’d started to pile rubble on the street then, and I was picking up. And I saw a tape, you know, one of these—

Caroline Dunaway: —video—

Fred Dunaway: —VHS. I picked it up, turned it over, and it says, “Camille, 1969.” (laughter) And the people with the press, he told his camera, said, “Come over here and take a picture of this.” (laughter) And Camille was no longer history; it was second place.

Caroline Dunaway: The first person to get to us from the outside world was our daughter.

Scull-Millet: And she’s from?

Caroline Dunaway: Seattle, Washington, and her name is Fran, Frances Dunaway.

Scull-Millet: How do you spell Frances?

Caroline Dunaway: F-R-A-N-C-E-S. And she had flown into Pensacola, and she and our nephew over in Pensacola loaded up two SUVs and came down. They had cases and cases of bottled water. They had antibiotics for everybody on our street. She had a medical kit that a doctor would die for. (laughter) And food, she even had fried chicken, which was the (laughter) first—

Fred Dunaway: Boots, water, gasoline.

Caroline Dunaway: Boots, she had all sizes of rubber boots and hard-toe boots, and she had even brought cell phones and had had our numbers put in the cell phones. Of
course we’d lost all of our friends’ telephone numbers that were in our memory phone. But she had it all. And then that afternoon, I have cousins over in Pensacola that have a condo, and they were frantic to get in touch with us, you know, and find out what had happened. And they told her to bring us over to the condo. So there was another man that lived on our street that had nowhere to go; in fact, there were two of them. And we took both of them over to Pensacola, too. And my husband got in the car with my nephew and his wife and one of the men. And then my son and another man and I got in the car with my daughter. So we’re behind them on I-10 going to Pensacola. And we had cell phones that were working, but there were no towers. Well, our car, the SUV that she had rented, started to kind of jumping along. I said, “Fran, how much gas do we have?” And she said, “We’ve got plenty of gas,” she said, “I don’t know what’s going on.” Well, the cars passing us started making signs to us, and my son Hunter said, “Fran, pull over. Let me see what’s going on. Something must be happening with this car.” So she pulled over to the side, and of course, there’s debris everywhere on the highway and all. And she pulled over, and underneath, flames were shooting out from under the car, and it had caught the debris on fire. So my son said, “Oh, Mom, get out of the car, quick. It’s on fire.” Well, three police cars went by and never stopped. Traffic was going by like crazy, and we were waving, trying to get them to get to the other side. You know, we didn’t want it to blow up with the family next to it. And a truck pulled out and pulled in front of it, and we’re all behind it and waving to traffic, you know, to either stop or get on the other side. And this truck pulls out, and it was a couple, young couple. And they came back, and he yells to us, “Don’t come near this car.” We thought, “Duh!” (laughter) You know, and he goes back to his truck, and he’s a fireman. So he gets his jacket and his little extinguisher and comes back, and he and my son then went back and put the fire out on the car. And we found out later it was the catalytic converter. But my husband and nephew, they had gone on. (laughter) And all afternoon, all we talked about was what we were going to have for dinner that night. And we didn’t get to Pensacola till two o’clock in the morning. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Well, you were lucky. The car worked, then, after the fire was put out?

Caroline Dunaway: No, no. It wouldn’t run at all, and my daughter got in that truck—it was just a tiny truck—with this couple, and she paid them $200 to take them to Mobile to where she could get another rental car. And we’re sitting in the car, not knowing where she is, worrying that they’d knocked her in the head for her money, or you know, we just could imagine all kind of evil things.

Scull-Millet: Of course, and hot.

Caroline Dunaway: And my son was upset with himself because he didn’t go. But she had rented the car, you know, and it was in her name, so she felt like she should go and do that. So it was a nightmare. But we’ve all—

Fred Dunaway: She came back with a car half the size of the one they had, the SUV, because it was the car that had the most gas in it. So she—
**Caroline Dunaway:** She had chosen it. It was a two-door.

**Fred Dunaway:** So when they left, they had to leave a lot of ice chests and stuff along the road because there wasn’t any room in the car.

**Caroline Dunaway:** We had taken all the ice chests back to Pensacola to refill them to take back to our neighborhood. And we had to make choices. We all sat, holding ice chests, all the way to Pensacola. (laughter) And I was in borrowed clothes; my friends had brought over some clothes, and I found one of his ties out in the yard. And I had tied up those pants with that tie. (laughter) And I just could imagine some of my clients driving by and seeing me out on the side of the highway. (laughter)

**Scull-Millet:** They were probably in worse shape than you were. Thinking back, tell me what your first night was like after the storm.

**Fred Dunaway:** That’s when we all gathered in that one house, and it was miserable because people were sleeping everywhere, and the mud was awful.

**Caroline Dunaway:** The stench.

**Fred Dunaway:** And you hated to lay down on the couch because you were muddy, you know, and all the beds were wet. And some people slept—you just had to sleep everywhere. There just wasn’t enough room for everybody.

**Caroline Dunaway:** We just took naps; you know, I wouldn’t say you really slept. You just were so exhausted that you just couldn’t help but sleep a little while.

**Fred Dunaway:** And two people were the loudest snorers. (laughter) Everybody complained about that. “Good gosh. I got to get out of this house tonight. I’m not sleeping here.” (laughter)

**Scull-Millet:** Someone snoring when you’re tired is really horrible, isn’t it?

**Fred Dunaway:** And you’re wondering why you can’t go to sleep and snore.

**Scull-Millet:** Yeah. You know, that you could use the gas is pretty remarkable because in many places, gas lines were broken, and they were just hissing away.

**Fred Dunaway:** Well, much of the gasoline—oh, you’re talking about the natural gas.

**Scull-Millet:** To cook.

**Caroline Dunaway:** The gas stove.
Scull-Millet: Right, to cook in there.

Fred Dunaway: Well, one of the secrets to building the FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency]-friendly hurricane house now is to be sure you have gas because gas stays; the lines are underwater, and that’s—

Caroline Dunaway: Underground.

Fred Dunaway: Underground, I mean, and also under the water, not affected at all.

Scull-Millet: Well, I’ll tell you. In Pass Christian, one of the reasons they wouldn’t let people back to their homesites—

Fred Dunaway: Because of the leaks?

Scull-Millet: The gas, and it was hissing. You know, we’ve had people say you could hear it.

Fred Dunaway: Yes, we had that same problem there. But, you’re right; the gas people’d cut it off, the main line, just to avoid any problems.

Scull-Millet: Um-hm, their liability.

Fred Dunaway: This hurricane means put in your own tank, buried in your yard, and it’s dedicated just to your house, and then you have that gas, which is what we’re going to do when we rebuild. We’re going to (inaudible). And that’ll always work unless you were to really get a hundred-foot wave. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: That would be too bad. (brief silence) Well, sometimes silence in an interview is good, when people need to think. I’m wondering if we should maybe go through this question bank, which was composed by the people for whom I work, and I think they have some reason for wanting me to ask these questions. Some of them we’ve already gone over.

Fred Dunaway: Once you get through, you can just have her list, if you don’t want to take notes. We’ve filled them in there.

Scull-Millet: Did you? Oh, that’s great.

Fred Dunaway: My handwriting’s terrible, but you know, I’ve just put some notes down to trigger our memory, actually.

Scull-Millet: Well, I don’t want to tie you up longer than you have today. So it’s 12:15.

Caroline Dunaway: We’re fine till 2:30.
Scull-Millet: Until 2:30. All right. OK, well, let’s just go through them. I know you’ve written the answers down, and I’ll take that back with me as well, but you may think of some other things as we have a conversation. So how long have y’all lived on the Mississippi Gulf Coast?

Caroline Dunaway: Well, we bought our house in 1987. Of course, we were both still working; then in [19]95, Fred retired from his second job. He was a contract manager for (inaudible) drilling in Oklahoma City. And he’d retired in 1980 from the military as a lieutenant colonel. And so we came back in [19]95. I was the manager for Mutual of New York’s office in Biloxi at the time. And, well, actually when I was working in Oklahoma City, and they had asked me to become the manager in Biloxi, it just was fortuitous because we had the home there. So we came back in [19]95. We actually moved into the house, which was an ongoing remodeling event for my husband all those years that he was retired. He put a lot of himself into the house, and it was lovely. We had a lot of antiques. I thought one of the interesting things about saving things from the storm; I should have told you about this earlier, but I have a chair that was made by my great-great-great-grandfather for my great-grandfather’s wedding. And it was caned, the seat was caned, by a slave. And unbeknownst to my mom, even, my grandfather, actually my great-grandfather had loaned it to the Smithsonian for thirty years. So sometime in the middle [19]70s, this package came from the Smithsonian back to my mother, and it was this chair. And my family, my siblings and I, had decided that we were going to give it to the Pleasant Reed House, which was a museum in Biloxi. And they wanted things in it that were made by slaves. And so we were going to dedicate it to them, and in fact we were to do that, that year at Christmastime. And we found that chair totally intact, in the sailboat that had come through our bedroom. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Well, that’s great. That’s great. But you have to wonder; how does that happen?

Fred Dunaway: It’s funny, the chair, someone had taken a black marker of some kind and on one of the stays on the chair—

Caroline Dunaway: On the back side of it.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, had written, “This chair was made by a Negro,” you know, and gave the date and caned it and all. And today you’d never do that; you’d never write on something like that. (laughter) But all of that was intact, and that was kind of faded a little bit, but you could still read it. So we have the chair, still.

Caroline Dunaway: We’re going to give it to Beauvoir now.

Scull-Millet: What happened to Pleasant Reed?

Caroline Dunaway: It was totally destroyed.
Fred Dunaway: Yeah, that was down right on [Highway] 90.

Caroline Dunaway: Pleasant Reed was a freedman, and he had built this whole house by himself. And they moved it down there close to the George Ohr, where the new museum is being built. And it was fully furnished; it was a really nice place, museum.

Scull-Millet: What a loss; that’s a terrible loss, not replaceable.

Caroline Dunaway: Right.

Scull-Millet: How many generations in your family have lived on the Mississippi Gulf Coast?

Caroline Dunaway: Well, I think my parents were the first ones to live on the Gulf Coast.

Fred Dunaway: So two generations, there.

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah. My great-great-grandparents lived up in Scott County, Mississippi, and they owned land that touches the Bienville National Forest before it was a national forest. I’m the eighth generation to actually own that property.

Scull-Millet: Wow, that’s really something. Well, I think we know why you were living here; we’ve gone over that. But can you describe your attachment to the region, what it means to both of you?

Fred Dunaway: Well, after over twenty years in the military, traveling throughout Europe, and then living in Oklahoma for fifteen years, we always wanted to come back South, always wanted to be on the water. So in [19]87, Caroline was down here by herself, looking for a place that we could buy, and she looked at Diamondhead and looked all around, and finally she called and said that we found this great place, just like we’ve always wanted. A lady will sell it, but she wants the right person to get in it, and the realtor was telling her that.

Caroline Dunaway: She said, “I don’t know; she’s had a couple of offers, but she’d refused it.”

Fred Dunaway: One reason she was so close was her husband had committed suicide there.

Scull-Millet: Oh, my goodness.

Caroline Dunaway: He was also military.
Fred Dunaway: So that would kind of bond her with Caroline. And a little sideline to that, a lot of locals wanted that place, and when we bought it, they despised us. We got letters from people saying, “Why won’t y’all sell it? You’re not even from here.” Well, we were from here, you know. And we know these people today, and we’re real close friends, but we were the unknown that had (laughter) slipped in there and bought this away from them. But Caroline kept calling me, and she says—

Caroline Dunaway: Fred kept saying, “No, we can’t afford it.”

Fred Dunaway: We can’t afford it, can’t afford it. And then she called back and said, “Well, I went ahead and made an offer.” And I said, “Well, why are you calling me then?” (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: Actually I called him and said, “We’ve bought a house.”

(laughter)

Fred Dunaway: And we rented it, and we never had a contract with anybody. They just—it was on the water, and most military guys, the first were some pilots, and when they would stay there, they’d have boats and all. And then when they left, they’d just give the keys to someone else, and we’d see a different name on the check, and we’d say, “Somebody else must have moved in.”

Caroline Dunaway: These doctors from the VA [Veterans Affairs hospital] ended up there, and then they really passed it on. And so we never even had to advertise it. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: But it was paying the note.

Scull-Millet: Oh, that’s the best way to buy a house. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: It’s the only way we could have handled it. That was what’s bothering me; worst thing in the world to happen is two houses, and trying to pay a note on both of them. But anyway in [19]95 after I retired from this drilling company, I came down, and we had to move a guy out, and tell him I’m going to remodel, and he was very disturbed. But that’s what attracted us was the water. We had the pier; we had a boat, and it was everything we ever dreamed of.

Caroline Dunaway: And it was a great neighborhood. It was mostly older people that lived down there, and they had a garden, Oak Park Garden Club, that I was a member of. And the ladies, some of the ladies that now are deceased, but they actually chartered it, you know, the garden club. And we had a great group. And my birthday is the twenty-third of December, and after my mom passed away, everybody just kind of forgot about my birthday. So I decided that I would give myself a party. (laughter) So, and we have no grandchildren, and I like children at Christmastime; so I started inviting people that had small children. And I had twelve children. And they would bring gifts for the humane society, or one year we gave jackets that we boxed
up and sent to Afghanistan. But every year their ticket was something different; you
know, when I'd get in touch with them about coming, I told them what their ticket was
going to be. But Santa Claus would come, and he would bring the children gifts. And
I had picked up little things all through the year for them, and it was just our special
time. Well, it turned into being a neighborhood party. (laughter) All of the neighbors
would come. So it was great. We always looked forward to it, and we always had a
big crowd. And it was just a neighborhood Christmas gathering.

Scull-Millet: That’s a real community.

Caroline Dunaway: Um-hm, we really enjoy it.

Scull-Millet: Um-hm. How many of your neighbors did you lose in Katrina?

Fred Dunaway: The rumor was that the only one, there was a lady—the house caved
in on her—down as you enter in.

Caroline Dunaway: She was ninety-one, and we thought she’d gone, [thought] people at her church had come and gotten her.

Fred Dunaway: That was as a result of the storm. Now Ms. Doris Delano, I don’t
know; she died later.

Caroline Dunaway: And Dr. Lang(?) (inaudible).

Fred Dunaway: Dr. Lang died; he owned a house, that’s the third house down. His
wife had died the year before, and he passed away right after the storm. I don’t know
of any others.

Caroline Dunaway: Crazy Fred.

Fred Dunaway: Oh yeah, there was one guy; he’s in a mental institution. He lived
back there; he never got over the storm, and he was—

Caroline Dunaway: Mm-mm, no.

Scull-Millet: Was he crazy before?

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, he would get out at night and yell profanities. He had one
arm, and he’d yell profanities, and everybody in the neighborhood (laughter)—

Fred Dunaway: He kind of had a cabin back; it was two streets over, and it was in
the wilderness. And he never cut his grass; the city would come in and give him a
citation, and they’d end up cutting the grass for him.

(brief interruption)
Scull-Millet: OK, so you were talking about Crazy Fred, and you were about to say he had so much—

Fred Dunaway: He had so many canned goods and food stored in that house preparing for hurricanes, that when he left, no one could get near the house, it was so—and finally the city, they condemned it, and they had to come down and—

Caroline Dunaway: —tear it down.

Fred Dunaway: —tear it down. And it was attracting rats and everything. It was just a really pathetic situation. So they were forced to take it out. And now it’s a vacant lot.

Scull-Millet: Right. So he was institutionalized. It sounds like he needed to have been for several years before the storm.

Caroline Dunaway: Right.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, he had only one arm; I understand he now has—

Caroline Dunaway: —lost both legs.

Scull-Millet: Oh golly. Poor guy; what a life. What about people who moved away?

Fred Dunaway: There was more than I thought moved away.

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah.

Scull-Millet: And won’t be coming back?

Fred Dunaway: No.

Caroline Dunaway: And our neighborhood has changed a lot as a result.

Fred Dunaway: There’s probably half a dozen houses up for sale back there. They’re just like us, you know. We would never build, like the level—we’re going to build, but we’re going to go up. And everyone’s got to face that. And our dilemma—a little off the subject—is at our age, are we ready to tackle another major house or not? And we’re not sure whether we need to go through that again. And that’s what has happened to these other people we’re talking about; they were older. All of them were older, and they’ve moved up country.

Caroline Dunaway: We’d like to go up to Seattle where our daughter is, but we still have Fred’s mother. She’s ninety-one, and she’s in a nursing home.
Fred Dunaway: Not here, in Fairhope.

Caroline Dunaway: In Fairhope, Alabama, but you know, we’re pretty much tied until something happens there.

Scull-Millet: Right. You don’t think she would want to go?

Fred Dunaway: She’ll move over here; I’m going to bring her over here. She’s ready to come here, but—

Caroline Dunaway: We got to find a nursing home that will—

Fred Dunaway: They’re packed; all the nursing homes are packed.

Scull-Millet: Oh, that’s right.

Caroline Dunaway: Um-hm.

Fred Dunaway: So we’re on the waiting list on a couple of them, and we’ve even put a deposit down on one house that’s not even built yet. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: In Seattle?

Fred Dunaway: No, here.

Caroline Dunaway: For her.

Scull-Millet: For her, uh-huh.

Caroline Dunaway: A nursing home.

Fred Dunaway: Just till we have a room. So she’s over there; she’s got twin boys. We’re both in Biloxi. She needs to be here in Biloxi.

Scull-Millet: True.

Fred Dunaway: We can see her every day, then. Right now, it’s once, twice a week, and that’s about it. It’s not good. We’re trying to get her over here, but there’s just no place to bring her. Now, we had, at our house that we lost, we had a full-handicapped, detached apartment; that was her office. We built it for her aunt and uncle, who we kept. We went to Maryland and brought them down. They were getting old; she was wheelchair-bound, and we built this handicapped facility for her. And she lived there for two years.

Caroline Dunaway: Four years.
Fred Dunaway: They were here for four years, OK. He was in the Naval home on the beach because he was retired from the military; [he was an] Air Force sergeant, POW [prisoner of war], and they loved that Naval home because with all of his military history, they get certain points. So if he was a POW, boy, that helps their status. And he’d retired, and he was an NCO [noncommissioned officer]. But anyway, he was there, and she was—and that would have been perfect for my mother, the point I’m getting to. But we’ve lost that opportunity. She could have lived there and been perfectly happy.

Caroline Dunaway: Out there it was not a part of our house. It was a separate building. But all we had left was a slab. We never found anything that was in my office. Thank goodness I had retired in April and had transferred most of the records up to the Jackson office.

Scull-Millet: Good heavens, really amazing.

Fred Dunaway: But that’s how it’s affected us.

Scull-Millet: As they say on television, life comes at you fast. (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: Life goes by fast. I don’t feel like I’m seventy. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: You don’t look like you’re seventy. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: I feel like, I told a guy the other day, “I’m almost seventy-one, but I don’t feel seventy-one. I feel more like ninety-one.” (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Just depends on what day of the week; closer it gets to Friday, the older I’m feeling.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Caroline Dunaway: We’re both golfers, and we stay pretty active. You know, we like to travel, and I’m still doing some consulting work. I’m going to be in Oklahoma, in fact, in two weeks doing some consulting work.

Scull-Millet: Yeah, I’ll bet it’s so good for you.

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, it keeps my mind sharp.

Scull-Millet: Yeah, I’m sure you look forward to it, yeah. Well, we all know where your neighborhood is, but for the record, describe to me a little bit about the location of the neighborhood.

Fred Dunaway: That’s another thing that attracted us. Back in the [19]40s, when Keesler Air Force was going to build a camp, Camp Keesler they called it, they
acquired a great deal of property back there, but someone had already bought the shoreline. Some realtor had bought the shoreline houses, so they couldn’t get all the way to the shoreline. So there’s just a little sliver of civilian houses back there that run right behind Keesler. And I don’t think there’s probably not over fifty houses back there. And so once you get down in there, you don’t have any traffic or anything. It’s kind of isolated. And Keesler’s a fine neighbor.

**Caroline Dunaway:** And the street’s shaded with big, old oak trees; there’s just a canopy over the street.

**Scull-Millet:** I love that.

**Fred Dunaway:** And the airplanes fly in and out of there all the time, which I love because I was a pilot in the military, and we’ve got a view of the new casinos from there, and the reflection on the water at night is beautiful. And the interstate’s close. It’s just the perfect place to be.

**Caroline Dunaway:** Porpoises play in the water out there, and we take our cast nets and go out and throw off the end of the dock. And we had to have a pier built the size of a helipad, you know. (laughter)

**Scull-Millet:** Right, that bulkhead out there. (laughter)

**Caroline Dunaway:** Right. (laughter) And we would catch, sometimes, a pound of the big, white shrimp in the fall of the year. And we could crab all year round out there.

**Fred Dunaway:** We’re two minutes from the gate, and we can go to the commissary in less than five minutes.

**Caroline Dunaway:** And the doctor.

**Fred Dunaway:** And the doctor, and the veterinarian, and it’s all back there. It’s perfect for us, but that’s one of the reasons. It’s the place we always wanted. Quick, in a boat, you can get to the Gulf in fifteen, twenty minutes. So it’s just ideal.

**Scull-Millet:** What happened to your boat? First of all, tell me a little bit about the boat, what size it was.

**Fred Dunaway:** It was a thirty-foot Black Fin with twin 250 outboards on the back, had a cabin, stove.

**Caroline Dunaway:** Great boat.

**Fred Dunaway:** And bathroom facilities.
Scull-Millet: Sailboat or completely motorized?

Fred Dunaway: No, it’s a powerboat. Yeah, and she also had her little sailboat, which we built a lift for her so she could raise and lower the sailboat. But this was a big boat; we had it tied. But we had power down there and TV down there, and the telephone was hooked up down there at one time.

Caroline Dunaway: We took it up the Back Bay and tied it down.

Fred Dunaway: Which we always have done during hurricanes because that’s the thing to do. Everybody goes up there and lashes down, and after the storm, we couldn’t find it. And the insurance paid me for it, and four or five weeks later, somebody called me and said they had found the boat. And I said, “It’s not mine anymore.” So I put them in touch with the insurance company. The last thing I need right now is a boat. (laughter) We’ve got no place to keep it, so I’ve just settled for selling it. So I understand that the insurance sold it to somebody for whatever.

Scull-Millet: Salvage? I mean it must have—

Fred Dunaway: Salvage, yes.

Scull-Millet: It was pretty damaged?

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, it was damaged, and someone had stolen—he said the props were gone off of it, that vandals had gotten them. But anyway, we had enough problems without a boat, and I was glad to get—

Caroline Dunaway: We had our sailboat out of the water and had it on the trailer, and it washed over two streets on the other side of us.

Fred Dunaway: And never lost the trailer. It was all hooked together when we found it.

Caroline Dunaway: So I still have my little sailboat.

Scull-Millet: Is it useable?

Fred Dunaway: No. (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: Well, it could be, you know.

Fred Dunaway: Well, it’s got a lot of work to be done.

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, but—it’s just a sixteen-foot Newport that was built over in Fairhope, and we sailed it all the way from Biloxi to Daphne one (laughter)—
Fred Dunaway: One weekend. Took us twenty-four hours.

Scull-Millet: That would be kind of scary in a sixteen-foot boat.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, especially when we—

Caroline Dunaway: —hit Mobile Bay, those big, old tankers.

Fred Dunaway: When we went through Pascagoula, there was a big ship coming in, you know. And this was the biggest thing I’ve ever seen; (laughter) it got dark when—

Caroline Dunaway: Especially when you’re down here, and it’s way up there. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: “Think they see us?” (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, right.

Fred Dunaway: So we had fun doing that.

Scull-Millet: Right. And you hope to have it sailing again someday? Do you?

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, yeah.

Scull-Millet: Yeah.

Fred Dunaway: Oh, I thought she was asleep. (referring to puppy)

Scull-Millet: What a baby.

Fred Dunaway: But since the storm, as you can tell, our life has changed dramatically, at this age. Now, those young kids down there, that have those homes, you know, they’re rebuilding—

Scull-Millet: It’s easier for them.

Fred Dunaway: —right on, but they’ve got a reason. We have nothing to keep us here except my mother. So every morning we wake up with another idea, you know.

Scull-Millet: So you’re not positive you’ll rebuild?

Fred Dunaway: We have options. We’d love to rebuild. We probably will rebuild.

Scull-Millet: Yeah, that’s what you’re leaning to.
Fred Dunaway: Yeah, we’re still haggling with the insurance, and the SBA [Small Business Administration]. And we didn’t qualify for the grant. Here’s something; we were not in a flood zone, but we had flood insurance because my property eventually is in the flood zone. If you’re headed towards the water, somewhere along there you get in a flood zone. But my neighbor that we evacuated to didn’t have any flood insurance because he was not in a flood zone, like, even in the same zone with me. He gets a grant; we get nothing. So your next question is about this political involvement. I’ve been to Trent Lott; he’s got the same problem I’ve got—

Caroline Dunaway: He’s suing his insurance company.

Fred Dunaway: —and Gene Taylor. And Trent Lott told us at the meeting the other night that he called the CEO [Chief Executive Officer] of his Allstate. Said the guy said he’d look into it. The guy said, “Well, I’ll get back with you.” He said, “He never got back with me.” He said, “In other words, insurance people are bigger than God.” (laughter) It’s just a shame.

Caroline Dunaway: And it’s a hassle, you know. Every time we go to do anything with whatever agency, it’s a hassle.

Scull-Millet: Oh, yeah. It takes time and energy, and you wonder, “Should I be doing something else with the time and energy I have?”

Fred Dunaway: And you know what bothers me, Stephanie? They say that 30 percent of the people have never applied for the grants. You know why? It’s too involved. There are poor people sitting down here; they don’t have Internet. They don’t know how to do it, who to go see, and it’s a shame. I feel so sorry for those people. They perfectly qualify for the grant. They’d get it if they could get the paperwork in.

Scull-Millet: I know, and it seems like someone should address that, you know, and resolve that problem.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, and I think eventually it’ll come to that. I think after all this settles, and grants, they’ll still have a lot of money left over, you know? Eighteen million is a lot of money to be divvying out a little piece at a time. Somebody needs to come along with these people and sit down with them and help them. And I always said that these churches come down and want to help build; some organization ought to come down and just help them with their paperwork.

Scull-Millet: That’s a good idea, you know; and maybe somebody would if they knew there was a need.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, have it headed up by an attorney maybe, and let them—even young kids out of college, they could sit down, spend two or three days training them,
giving them the forms, and say, “OK. See that house down there with those two old folks rocking in a chair on the front porch?” (laughter)

Scull-Millet: That’s exactly right.

Fred Dunaway: The back of the house is gone, but they’re still enjoying it. But anyway, that bothers me that that exists.

Scull-Millet: Yeah, too much red tape; it’s too complicated to work through it.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, and it’s so inconsistent. We are insured with USAA; the guy next to us, Lloyd Moon, has Allstate, I think. And the next guy is USAA. Now, his house is still there; he got $75,000 to repair it. Our house is—

Caroline Dunaway: Wind damage.

Fred Dunaway: Wind damage, that’s the—you know, I assume you know the flood/wind—

Scull-Millet: Wind versus flood, yeah.

Fred Dunaway: Our house is completely gone, and we got $1400 from wind. Now, where is the consistency?

Caroline Dunaway: From the same insurance company.

Fred Dunaway: And we’re fifty feet apart. Now, where is the consistency there? It’s just awful. Those kinds of things are very disturbing, and nobody’s got an answer.

Scull-Millet: Do you have any options? I mean, can you appeal it?

Fred Dunaway: Yes, we’re in that process. That’s why, I’m telling you, that’s why we’re boggled down. We’ve got to—

Caroline Dunaway: It’s just frustrating.

Fred Dunaway: —go through this stuff, and finally you just want to throw in the towel. But see, the SBA, we went to apply for an SBA loan, and they said—I said, “First thing I want to do is, we don’t have a house; so I’m going to pay off the mortgage.” I had just enough insurance from wind to pay off the mortgage.

Caroline Dunaway: No, from flood.

Fred Dunaway: I’m sorry, from flood to pay off the mortgage. So that wiped out all the insurance payment with that. Then we go to SBA, and they said, “No, you don’t qualify for a small business loan”—and everybody can get a small business [loan]—
“because you paid your [mortgage] off. They didn’t demand it, did they? ‘Pay the mortgage off.’” I said, “Well, I thought that was the thing to do.” “No, they should have offered you, if you hadn’t have paid it off, they would have held the money in escrow and helped you build it. So there was no demand to pay that off.” So I said, “I can’t believe this.”

**Scull-Millet:** Who would know that?

**Caroline Dunaway:** Yeah. And the mortgage company sure didn’t tell us.

**Fred Dunaway:** The mortgage company, the whole world knew what was going on down here. The mortgage company should have said, “All right, everybody that’s got insurance, tell them this is the option,” you know. “Leave the money there, and then we can distribute it to them.” So we paid the darn thing off. (laughter)

**Caroline Dunaway:** We could have rebuilt our house with that, you know.

**Fred Dunaway:** You do the right thing, you think, and it’s the wrong thing.

**Scull-Millet:** Well, it may be the right thing, you know, morally and ethically, but it’s counterproductive to getting your needs met.

**Fred Dunaway:** Why, sure. And everybody says, “When are y’all going to build?” I said, “Well, we got a lot of things we got to get worked out.” So it has to do with what size house we build, and the house we have, it would be an asset to that neighborhood. It is gorgeous. But I don’t think we could afford it. (laughter) So we may go with a cabin. We’ve been living here three or four weeks.

**Caroline Dunaway:** Um-hm.

**Fred Dunaway:** We just moved out of the trailer, you know. We were in that little trailer over there.

**Scull-Millet:** In the FEMA trailer, yeah.

**Fred Dunaway:** So now we’ve got to give up the trailer.

**Scull-Millet:** The FEMA palace.

**Fred Dunaway:** Yeah. But we like it there because when we go over there, we can have a bathroom there, and the TV’s connected up. And it’s kind of (inaudible).

**Caroline Dunaway:** And if we rebuild, you know, then we’d have a place to stay when they start delivering materials.

**Scull-Millet:** But since you bought a house, you have to give up the FEMA trailer.
Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Caroline Dunaway: Um-hm.

Fred Dunaway: So we—

Scull-Millet: Can you live in the sailboat? I mean, can you—

Fred Dunaway: No, it’s not that big. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: —have a base in the sailboat.

Fred Dunaway: One of us could. (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: It doesn’t have a bathroom. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: There is no room for two. (to the puppy) Are you untying my shoestring? (laughter)

Scull-Millet: “Not only did I untie it, now I’m going to eat it.” (laughter) So how do you know if it was affected by the flood or the wind, the house? Is that something that your insurance determines?

Fred Dunaway: Yes.

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, they send an adjuster out.

Scull-Millet: And you take their word for it.

Fred Dunaway: Well, you have to. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: You have to.

Caroline Dunaway: We argued with them, but they have—

Fred Dunaway: It’s like one of the letters I wrote to my insurance; I’d like to see the genius that can come out there five or six weeks after the hurricane and say, “Yeah, this was wind, and that was flood.” Now who in the world has got—and they say they can do it.

Caroline Dunaway: They weren’t there during the storm and saw the trees blowing over, and the roof of the house falling off before the water ever came up.
Fred Dunaway: And I’m out there; my pictures have been used. I was there; I took pictures of all the neighbors’ houses. All the neighbors have taken my pictures, and it’s part of their—

Scull-Millet:—their claims.

Fred Dunaway: Their claim, their discovery, and they’re getting their written statements (inaudible). And you look up at those pines—they’ve taken them all down—all the tops of the pines were snapped off. And that’s wind; that’s not flood up there fifty feet in the air. (laughter) Anyway, you could talk about this forever, but the frustration is you can’t go to anyone (laughter) for answers.

Scull-Millet: So your photographs don’t help you with the insurance company.

Caroline Dunaway: No.

Fred Dunaway: No, they read those like they do, differently from the other people. They’ve even got statements now; some of these claims from meteorologists. But this insurance is just like Gene Taylor says, you know, “They’re right up there with pedophiles.” (laughter)

Scull-Millet: What a scam; they want you to pay your premiums, but when it’s time to help you—

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. And I almost threw up when my insurance company, “We appreciate your business for forty-four years; we’ve been with you.” I said, “Take my premium and multiply it times forty-four years and see how much money you got. It’s a lot of stinking money. And y’all won’t give me but $1400.” Because flood is a government policy.

Scull-Millet: It’s wrong; it’s just wrong. It needs some major overhauling. Is there anything you want to say about the traditions—

(puppy squeaks)

Fred Dunaway: That goes on all the time. She snaps his tail; he snaps at her. The traditions?

Scull-Millet: — in the neighborhood? I know we talked about your Christmas party.

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, we had Fourth of July, and Fred and I always dressed up like the Statue of Liberty. (laughter) And he took me in the little dinghy up and down the beach, and everybody’d come out and wave.

Fred Dunaway: Everybody came out and waved. (laughter)
Caroline Dunaway: And we always had a big crowd at—

Fred Dunaway: I’ll tell you what I enjoyed on the one-year anniversary [of Katrina]; we had, all the neighbors got together at our house.

Caroline Dunaway: One-year anniversary of Katrina.

Fred Dunaway: And we laughed, and we cried, and we prayed, and we all got back together, again. And last time I’ve seen some of the neighbors was a year ago, but they all showed up for that moment, which was nice.

Caroline Dunaway: Our daughter sent some ice cream. She said, “To the Kensington Street Survivors. Thinking of you; grateful you’re here and hoping to freshen up your day with a little extra sweetness.”

Scull-Millet: She sent ice cream to you.

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah.

Fred Dunaway: It was packed in ice.

Scull-Millet: You think it came all the way from Seattle? Did it?

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, yeah. Yeah. It was from a creamery up there called Herman’s. I’ve got one in there; it’s wonderful ice cream.

Fred Dunaway: Those pints. It was so funny; everybody wanted it, but it was so stinking hard, (laughter) we couldn’t get to it. Everybody was—we had screwdrivers and everything, trying to get—(laughter)

Scull-Millet: Hatchets. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: We had a crew of three people; all they were trying to do was get ice cream out. They finally started unwrapping them and cutting them with a saw knife.

Scull-Millet: Oh, funny. So funny.

Fred Dunaway: The thought was nice. (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: The people on our street called Fred the mayor of Kensington. In fact, this week, we’re trying to get—Keesler is planning to bring eighteen-wheelers and come down our street and go up Yorkshire to tear out all of that Keesler housing that’s back in there behind us.

Fred Dunaway: To rebuild it, those homes. They have to go through Oak Park to get back there.
Caroline Dunaway: And they’d have to cut some live oak tree limbs; so we’ve organized. Fred wrote a letter to the general.

Fred Dunaway: And I spent all day Friday getting signatures on it; everybody (inaudible). And now they’re going to take a look at it.

Caroline Dunaway: Our councilman is wanting to be appointed as the spearhead for it, now. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: It already has a spearhead, right? (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: He called me and said, “I’ll take it from here, Fred.” (laughter)

Scull-Millet: What did you tell him?

Fred Dunaway: I said, “Good, because I’m going to be out of town.” (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Are you ready to give it up?

Fred Dunaway: Well, yeah. I got it started; that’s all they needed.

Caroline Dunaway: They couldn’t arrange a meeting until after the twenty-fifth of October. And our daughter is going to have to have a hysterectomy. So we’re going up to stay with her, and we want to be up there for that. So we’ll be gone, but Fred has gotten that moving.

(dog moans, laughter)

Scull-Millet: I don’t know how to spell that.

Caroline Dunaway: (to puppy) Hero, you’re on the air, now.

Scull-Millet: I don’t know how I’m going to transcribe that noise.

Fred Dunaway: (to puppy) Here, you want out? Are you trying to talk?

Caroline Dunaway: He talks to you.

Scull-Millet: I love them. I just love them. Do you want to address the question about your most vivid memories of your community before Hurricane Katrina?

Fred Dunaway: I think the parties, the neighborhood parties when we’d get together, like we were talking about.
Caroline Dunaway: And the Collins always had their family reunion three doors down from us, and we were always involved in that. And they’d have their sailing regatta, and all of our sailboats took part. So it was a fun neighborhood.

Scull-Millet: You’re so lucky; you know? I mean, there aren’t a lot of communities like that around these days.

Fred Dunaway: Well, that’s one thing we’re aware of, and that’s why we hate to leave it. But we’ll see.

Caroline Dunaway: It’s changed. The Collins, Paul Collins and his wife Rose, she is an artist, and she’s also a very, very good carver. And they aren’t going to come back to the neighborhood. And Dr. Lane, he’s gone. (dog groans, laughter) Hero’s talking to us, our dog. But, you know, there are some younger people moving in, which is nice; there’ll be some young children back on the street, you know, that haven’t been during our time there. But I don’t know if we’re going to still have the same kind of camaraderie with them that we had, you know, before.

Scull-Millet: It may take a different form. You don’t know if it’ll be as intense, you know; it’ll take a different form.

Fred Dunaway: Well, it’ll never be the same again. It’ll never be the same. Plus the casinos are coming in, and they’re increasing, and property values have gone sky-high, which is unusual. I can’t believe it.

Caroline Dunaway: And we have almost a full acre lot of waterfront; you know, we have 218 feet on the water down there.

Scull-Millet: Do you think it’s worth more now than it was prior to Katrina?

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, and it’s going to get even more valuable because of the casinos. You know, people have got to have a place to live.

Scull-Millet: It’s so ironic, you know?

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, but they say that happens in Florida when hurricanes go there.

Scull-Millet: Well, that’s just the way it is; we don’t have to understand why it’s that way, I guess, but that’s the nature of the beast, I think.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. It’s frustrating, because there’s really no answer to it. You could pick it to death; (laughter) have to wait and see.

Scull-Millet: How has the storm changed the way you think about your community?
Caroline Dunaway: Well, just in the ways we just talked about, just discussed. You know, it’s younger people coming in. There’s people coming in, buying up houses and remodeling them cheaply to resell, just to make a lot of money.

Fred Dunaway: Or rent them, and that’s what bothers me. You got three or four rental houses down there, and that never—well, if you get the right people.

Scull-Millet: It’s the real luck of the draw, as far as you’re concerned, because you can’t control it; you’re not the landlord.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Scull-Millet: Well, you thought of it as home prior to Katrina. How does that play now for you?

Fred Dunaway: It could be our home again, if the things work out that we discussed. And we have more positives to make it our home than we do negatives, but when we’ve got a daughter in Seattle that’s begging us to come up there, (laughter) I guess what I’m saying is, this has happened. Because this happened, certain opportunities are there, certain decisions that we can make. To put it quite bluntly, if someone came along and made us a hotshot offer on that land, we’d probably take our money and go, go up and live with our daughter in that area. Our son works for Beau Rivage. He’s an engineer for them; he’s single, so he’s doing fine. He’s rebuilding. But because of Katrina, now these options are there, which weren’t even options before.

Scull-Millet: So a home you might not have considered leaving before—

Caroline Dunaway: Mm-mm, not at all.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Scull-Millet: —now that’s part of the decision. You could leave.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Scull-Millet: Well, let’s just talk a little bit about the information and response around the storm. How and when did you hear about Katrina?

Fred Dunaway: Well, when it came out of North Africa. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: You were watching?

Fred Dunaway: Uh-huh. We always watch it. One of my shutters on the front, on the Bay side, has Georges. You know, we replace them.

Caroline Dunaway: Every time there’s a storm, we’d write on there.
Fred Dunaway: And I have seven names listed up there. And then I’ve got Katrina, and it’s gone. The whole board’s gone. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: The board’s gone.

Fred Dunaway: But we watch these storms and—(dog groans) I don’t know what you want, Hero.

Caroline Dunaway: I’m getting him his bones, and he wants a bone.

Fred Dunaway: We always watch them, but this one, now, Hurricane Georges came right up the Bay. It came right through Ocean Springs there, and we never had water up. You know, where y’all were sitting earlier this morning, it didn’t even get up there, and then all of a sudden, you know, the TV said, “Folks, I’m telling you; this is bad. The east side is going to hit Biloxi.” And they tell you that all the time; every year they warn you, “You got to get out of town.” And we never have, but—

Caroline Dunaway: We will next time. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: I’ve never seen anything like this one.

Scull-Millet: Yeah, you will next time. Do you feel like you have [any post-traumatic stress symptoms]?

(brief interruption)

Scull-Millet: So how does that manifest for you? That post-traumatic stress thing?

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, I cry at the drop of a hat.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, whenever we have these parties, it’s hard to keep everybody from getting too emotional, you know. You really work at it; you make fun of people and things, but yeah, I held up about three days, and then when we got over to Pensacola one night, I just couldn’t take it anymore. You keep waking up in the morning, and you say, “Gosh, I can’t believe we don’t have anything anymore.”

Scull-Millet: Right. I know it must seem unreal.

Fred Dunaway: All of our antiques and even to this day, you think of something. I was a golfer throughout [my career]; my last job, I was a contract manager, and I went out and entertained people to get business for the drilling company. And I had saved enough golf balls to get me through age ninety-five. (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: And me, too. (laughter)
Fred Dunaway: And I had them; and they were just for retirement.

Scull-Millet: That’s a bundle of money. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: Oh, yeah, and they were free. (laughter) And the other day, I said, “Doggone.” I went golfing out there the other day, and I had to buy a sleeve of balls; it just made me sick. But what’s really bad is all these people talk to you, says, “I’ve never seen so many golf balls.” Says, “When I’ve got nothing to do, I just go hit them out into the Bay.” And I wanted to say, “Well, I know where they came from.” But stuff like that. Every day it’s something.

Caroline Dunaway: And our pictures. You know, to me—we lived in Germany for five years, and we bought a lot of antiques over there, and I had my children’s portraits painted in oil over there. And they’re gone, and you know, things that we just can’t replace. Fred was stationed in Iran, and I went over and stayed six weeks, and we had carpets. You can see we got a couple of little ones in here. And we were able—we took them to a—my cousins came up from Pensacola and helped us. And they took them. It took six men to lift one; it was so heavy with muck. And took it over to a place in Pensacola, and he did a pretty good job, I think.

Scull-Millet: Cleaning it?

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, so they don’t look like they once did, but then neither do I. (laughter) But they’re useable, and the colors held well because they’re natural colors they used.

Fred Dunaway: We were walking along two doors down. For days and days after the storm, we’d go walking and looking for stuff. And she has a niece named Stephanie. Stephanie calls on the phone, and we’re walking. And we’re picking up stuff, and we picked up a picture, and it’s a picture of Stephanie.

Caroline Dunaway: Turned it over, it was a picture of Stephanie. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: While she was talking to her. And she said, “Stephanie, I can’t believe it. I just found a picture of you.” Just stuff like that. And the picture was savable, I think.

Scull-Millet: Did you get very many photos to save?

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, I could show you a boxful of them out there, but they all have muck on them. A lot of my friends have been gathering up pictures and giving to us.

Scull-Millet: That you might have sent them years before.

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah.
Scull-Millet: Oh, look how cute.

Caroline Dunaway: That was back in the [19]70s, a picture that we sent to one of our friends.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, stuff like that is so touching, that people would think about it.

Caroline Dunaway: And we had three weddings at our house.

Scull-Millet: So there were wedding pictures that folks could send you.

Caroline Dunaway: Right, that they had taken.

Fred Dunaway: And I was with a unit in Vietnam that was half Australian Navy guys and the US Army. It was the only unit like it in the world. They called it Experimental Military Unit, EMU. An emu is a flightless bird. (laughter) We got a lot of kidding about it, but that was thirty-five years ago. And I had a reunion here at our house in Biloxi, entertained them for two days. They fed them, you know; the city got involved.

Caroline Dunaway: That was on Memorial Day before Katrina.

Fred Dunaway: And then we ended up at Fort Rucker; there was a big monument made for this unit because it was a very unusual unit. The ambassador to Australia flew in, and it was a magnificent—

Caroline Dunaway: We had a sixty-two car caravan that was led by police all the way from Biloxi to Fort Rucker, Alabama.

Fred Dunaway: They’d say, “Fred, how are we going to get from Biloxi? The memorial’s at one; we’re leaving at six.” Said, “How are you going to get there in time.” And I said, “Watch.” And we had a police escort all the way through.

Caroline Dunaway: All the little towns.

Fred Dunaway: Mobile picked us up; they turned us over to Saraland. Saraland took us on up the road.

Scull-Millet: That’s great.

Fred Dunaway: Every little town we went through, people were out waving flags.

Scull-Millet: Oh, fabulous.
Fred Dunaway: But anyway, my daughter, you know, came down here. They took up a collection and sent her $1000.

Caroline Dunaway: The Australians.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. And then a few of them took up collections and sent her. And then one day I get a check for $10,000 that all of them had contributed just a little bit. But when you got that many people, it really—things like that are really touching. It’s just really, really hard to take.

Scull-Millet: That’s what life is really all about. It’s the bottom line.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. You wish you could—how do you show them your appreciation?

Scull-Millet: By living and laughing and loving them.

Fred Dunaway: Well, like some of them told me, “You’ll have an opportunity to help someone.” So we’re concentrating on that now.

Scull-Millet: Yeah, the circle goes around the world. And you decided not to evacuate because all these storms before, and Camille, hadn’t harmed your home before.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Scull-Millet: You know, I’ve heard people say that Camille killed more people in Katrina than in Camille. I was telling Caroline, I lived in Gulfport during Camille. I was fifteen years old, so a lot of it went over my head. It was just, “Oh, we don’t go to school till three weeks later, and this’ll be fun.” But, yeah, you know, that was always the benchmark. And I just couldn’t believe that Katrina at Category Three would be worse than Camille, but it was, of course, the size and the duration.

Fred Dunaway: And the wrong side of the eye had a lot to do with it.

Scull-Millet: That’s right. The whole placement.

(brief interruption)

Scull-Millet: We’ve talked about your reaction. Did you prepare much for hurricanes? Did you stock food?

Fred Dunaway: Oh, yeah.

Scull-Millet: You felt prepared?
Fred Dunaway: Oh, yeah, we had a great hurricane preparation besides the storm windows.

Caroline Dunaway: We had a brand-new generator (laughter) we never used; it washed away.

Scull-Millet: Where did it go? (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: We don’t know.

Fred Dunaway: We were talking about getting gas earlier from cars. We finally got one of those generators. We poured the oil out of it, and it was full of water, and monkeyed around with it, changed the plug, and we finally got a generator running. This is ten days after the storm. But we had no gasoline, so we went around siphoning gas out of all these cars. A lot of them had water in them, too, so you were taking a chance. But we siphoned probably fifty, sixty gallons of [gasoline] out of all these abandoned cars. Somebody tried to borrow my brother’s car, and they were siphoning gas, too. But they got too much water in there, and he had to have the engine replaced. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: And your brother is down on the Coast also.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, he lives on a boat. He’s always had that dream, and he kept that boat at our house during the time that we were renting it. They kept it at the pier.

Scull-Millet: What was I going to ask you? Oh, did you feel, when you were siphoning gas, that those cars were precarious or dangerous? What happened to the cars? Did they all come back down to earth?

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, they were all, of course, filled up with water, and they were all nasty. And anything you had in the trunk was gone. The cars were all underwater. Salt water and gasoline motors don’t mix. So they were all destroyed, not physically, although they were banged up. But the gasoline was still good in the tanks.

Scull-Millet: Amazing.

Caroline Dunaway: We had a car and a van, and we’d taken the van and parked it where we thought was higher ground, but it was also destroyed.

Scull-Millet: And anything in it?

Caroline Dunaway: Everything we owned was gone.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, everything in it; it just filled up with water and all that mud and stuff. It was awful.
Caroline Dunaway: We had to get new golf clubs. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: Sure did.

Scull-Millet: OK. We’ve talked about your experience as Hurricane Katrina approached. I guess I’m wondering at what point you thought, “Well, we’re in trouble.”

Fred Dunaway: When the water started going into our house across the street because it had never gotten there before. And I said, “Oh, this is going to be a dandy, you know.” And you just say, “Well, I hope it doesn’t get any higher.” And then you wonder how high.

Scull-Millet: And at some point, it’s up to Caroline’s neck.

Fred Dunaway: Um-hm.

Scull-Millet: So what are you thinking at that point?

Fred Dunaway: That’s when we were going to go to the house next door. All we had was this house. We wouldn’t dare get in a tree because they were falling left and right. And so we were going to go up and get in. That was our plan.

Caroline Dunaway: But the problem was the older people and the man with one leg. You know, well, they weren’t able to get up the steps. So we would have probably done that sooner had it not been for them. And we just felt like the best thing to do was to keep them in that boat, and if the water didn’t get any higher, which fortunately for us, it didn’t.

Fred Dunaway: As Caroline said, we had a generator, and probably fifty gallons of gas, all set aside.

Scull-Millet: The fifty gallons floated off.

Fred Dunaway: Oh yeah, uh-huh.

Caroline Dunaway: We had lots of bottled water, and that was all gone, you know. All of our canned goods were gone. Everything was gone.

Scull-Millet: So your hurricane preparedness kit washed away. It was a good one, but (laughter) you didn’t get to use it.

Fred Dunaway: Right.

Scull-Millet: OK. So we talked about the immediate aftermath a little bit. You may have told me this already, but how long did it take Fran to get to you?
Caroline Dunaway: Three days.

Scull-Millet: Three days.

Fred Dunaway: She got here. That was another touching moment. She got here quicker than FEMA or anybody. And I looked—rubble was piled in the street, houses. You know, and I saw her coming over this rooftop. The house was—

Caroline Dunaway: —in the middle of the street.

Fred Dunaway: —in the street, and she had a pack on her back, and she was hoofing it.

Scull-Millet: And you recognized her—

Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Scull-Millet: —right away. Didn’t really expect her because—

Fred Dunaway: No.

Scull-Millet: —she hadn’t been able to talk to you.

Caroline Dunaway: Right.

Fred Dunaway: The last conversation was, she was talking to Caroline when the doors collapsed in the concrete house.

Caroline Dunaway: I was talking to her on my cell phone, and she said, “Mom, what’s that noise?” And I said, “It’s the water coming through this door. I’ll call you back in thirty minutes.” And she said, “Mom, you call me every thirty minutes.” And that was the last she heard from us because my phone got wet. And, of course, the towers were all gone, and we couldn’t call. But the first person we saw was a FEMA man came by with a cadaver dog. And they didn’t have anything for those of us living, but they had cadaver dogs out looking for dead bodies.

Fred Dunaway: And I was glad of that because I wasn’t interested in finding any dead people. And those dogs were great; they were really effective.

Scull-Millet: And did they find cadavers in your neighborhood?

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah, there were, I think they said, three. I know Ms. Dylan, and they said the man down on the far end, down there. He actually, they said, died of a heart attack during the storm.
**Fred Dunaway:** They would take spray paint and mark a house after they checked it, and they had certain codes so that they could keep people from checking it twice.

**Caroline Dunaway:** If they had a black number on it, then there was somebody dead had been in that house.

**Scull-Millet:** And what about removal of the corpse?

**Fred Dunaway:** Just emergency vehicles would come down. If they couldn’t get to them, they’d stretcher them or put them in a body bag.

**Scull-Millet:** Did they take them as they found them? Were they on radios?

**Fred Dunaway:** Yeah.

**Caroline Dunaway:** I went back home so I wouldn’t have to watch it.

**Fred Dunaway:** Yeah, they had them immediately; they got them immediately. Not in our area, but over on the east side is really where they found the abundance of them. That’s where my son lives, so I spend a lot of time over there.

**Caroline Dunaway:** Fortunately, our son was with us.

**Scull-Millet:** He was with you. He came to your house and stayed with you.

**Caroline Dunaway:** Right, and he lost his house and everything he owned, too.

**Scull-Millet:** If he had stayed at his house, would he have survived?

**Fred Dunaway:** I doubt it.

**Caroline Dunaway:** I don’t know.

**Fred Dunaway:** I doubt it. Those houses were all piled up on top of each other, and he was an author. And he had two books that he had—

**Caroline Dunaway:** —ready to go to print.

**Fred Dunaway:** And he lost all of that.

**Scull-Millet:** Will he start them again?

**Caroline Dunaway:** I hope so.

**Fred Dunaway:** I think he’s probably working on some stuff.
Caroline Dunaway: I hope so.

Scull-Millet: We’ve talked about who was with you, why you stayed. We’ve talked about the aftermath. So when Fran got there, what was that like? What did y’all do?

Caroline Dunaway: Cried. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Tell me about that.

Caroline Dunaway: We cried a lot.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. And then when we walked back through that same rubble, we had to cut paths around it, or the best way was to go over it. And we ended up taking Forrest out that way; he was the one-legged guy. We put him in a wooden chair and had two two-by-fours; it took four people, and we actually walked him over the top of that house because that was the only way out for a while.

Scull-Millet: What was his destination? Where were you taking him?

Fred Dunaway: He was going back to Oklahoma; his daughter was down at the—

Caroline Dunaway: —far end. She couldn’t get in with her car, so we had to get him out.

Fred Dunaway: So we took him back, yeah. But anyway, my daughter came right over that, and then we followed her back to the car where she had all of this stuff. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Where was her car? How far in could she drive?

Fred Dunaway: Oh, it was down, out—you know where the Department of Marine Resources is?

Scull-Millet: What’s the address? Do you know?

Fred Dunaway: You came by it coming in here.

Caroline Dunaway: It’s on Bay View.

Scull-Millet: On Bay View.

Fred Dunaway: It’s almost over where [Highway] 110 is.

Scull-Millet: Did she come down I-10?

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, she came in I-10.
Scull-Millet: From Mobile?

Caroline Dunaway: Uh-huh.

Fred Dunaway: She came in I-10 in there. She said all they heard on the radio was, “Don’t go in there; it’s blocked off.” But they kept coming, and she said, “Dad, we didn’t have anybody stop us.” She said, “There’s very few people on the road.”

Scull-Millet: She actually got pretty close to you.

Caroline Dunaway: It’s within half a mile.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah.

Caroline Dunaway: We all walked; everybody that was physically capable (laughter) walked back down to her car and just, we started unloading it and just doling out to everybody up and down our street, because she had it loaded with ice and water and fried chicken (laughter) and boots. You know, everybody needed rubber boots because it was still muck.

Fred Dunaway: She took this money that the people had sent her, and—

Caroline Dunaway: —that our friends sent to her.

Fred Dunaway: And they stopped at the army salvage place.

Caroline Dunaway: Army surplus.

Fred Dunaway: Surplus, and they got a bunch of stuff and the chicken. (laughter) Every time anybody interviewed me, I was chewing on a chicken wing. (laughter) I couldn’t believe it. After I looked back, I said, “Look, all I was doing was eating chicken.” (laughter) And I wouldn’t even stop eating to talk. And now I’m so embarrassed. (laughter) Starving to death. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: That’s great.

Caroline Dunaway: But pretty soon they cleared all—it was a week or ten days before they got the houses out of the street. And then the Red Cross was able to get in there with water, and Salvation Army came twice a day and gave us food.

Fred Dunaway: They’d blow that horn at eight in the morning or eleven for lunchtime. And you’d walk out, and they’d just hand it out to you. Shovels—

Caroline Dunaway: Gloves. You know, it was two weeks; it was a good two weeks before we really got good help back in there.
Fred Dunaway: Yeah, the first (inaudible) were the MREs [meals ready to eat]. You know the meals ready to eat?

Scull-Millet: Right.

Fred Dunaway: In the military.

Caroline Dunaway: They’re good. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Were they that good in Vietnam? (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: Well, we didn’t have them when I was in Vietnam. We had a—not that modern. See, that was a result of the—

Caroline Dunaway: —space program.

Fred Dunaway: —space program. They developed these MREs, and then they said, “Well, the men in the military could use these.” But what we had in Vietnam were hot meals. That’s what the helicopters would do is fly these hot meals around in these big containers, you know.

Scull-Millet: I didn’t know that.

Fred Dunaway: Open them up and dish you out, and then they’d load them back up and fly out.

Scull-Millet: My dad was in World War II, and they had the rations, you know. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: They had this pemmican. Yeah, the K-rations, awful.

Scull-Millet: Awful.

Caroline Dunaway: Have you tried these new MREs?

Scull-Millet: I did, yeah.

Fred Dunaway: They’re not bad.

Caroline Dunaway: And they heat right there in the bag. It’s amazing.

Fred Dunaway: I’ve still got some stacked back there just for memories. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: I hope you don’t need them again this year.
Caroline Dunaway: Yeah.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. (laughter)

Caroline Dunaway: Not in my lifetime, please.

Scull-Millet: So you don’t feel that you were injured?

Caroline Dunaway: No.

Scull-Millet: You were bruised badly.

Caroline Dunaway: Bruised.

Scull-Millet: No broken bones?

Caroline Dunaway: No, no cuts.

Scull-Millet: No stepped-on nails.

Fred Dunaway: Our daughter brought those hard-toed—

Caroline Dunaway: —boots.

Fred Dunaway: With the metal. That really helped us walking around in—the potential for injury—

Caroline Dunaway: There was glass and nails.

Fred Dunaway: We had a boy, a friend of ours who stepped on a nail and another one that got sick after he left as a result of—he was—

Caroline Dunaway: —internal.

Scull-Millet: Injuries?

Fred Dunaway: He was putting his head under the water and looking for stuff. I wasn’t about to put my head underwater. So I think that got him. He had some kind of—

Scull-Millet: —infection. There’s a deep-sea bacteria that people can get sick with from eating oysters, but it’s seen [in] deep sea. And we interviewed some of the nurses at Biloxi Regional. They saw so many infections of that particular bacteria. So if he, you know, put his head where this could get in his mouth, his ears, his eyes, not a good idea.
Fred Dunaway: Yeah. One day three girls came giving vaccinations, and we set them up at our neighbor’s house. And we went around grabbing everybody.

Caroline Dunaway: Everybody lined up.

Fred Dunaway: And she said, “I’m not going to have enough stuff. I’ve got to go back and get some more.” And then she asked us, a few days later, if we could come down, the people that didn’t have it, come down to where the Red Cross was set up downtown. And it’s funny now. I’ve got a little sideline. When we got to McChord Air Force Base up in Seattle, we went in to get a booster shot. And there was this little old guy there that said, “Well, where are your records?” “Don’t have any records.” “Are you sure?” I said, “I got my first shot in the middle of the street down there in Katrina.” “Well, whoever gave them to you had to have records.” And this lady major came out; she said, “Son—” I’ll never forget—said, “These are Katrina victims. Take them for their word. They don’t have any records.” And he just huffed and puffed and walked away, and they shot us, just from our word. Heck, we had an ID card, a driver’s license with Biloxi, Mississippi on it. And go to [J.C.] Penney’s in Seattle and who’s that other one?

Caroline Dunaway: Bed, Bath and Beyond. And you know, I had my credit card, but they wanted to see ID. So when they see Mississippi on there, they said, “Oh, were you involved in Katrina?” And actually what they said was, “Oh, you lived down in New Orleans.” And I said, “No, we lived in Biloxi, Mississippi, where the storm hit. New Orleans had a flood.” But they offered us a 30 percent discount on anything we bought while we were up in Seattle.

Scull-Millet: Penney’s; and Bed, Bath, and Beyond?

Caroline Dunaway: Bed, Bath, and Beyond.

Scull-Millet: That’s wonderful.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, I wrote the CEOs in every place like that.

Caroline Dunaway: One night we went in a restaurant up there with my daughter, and we were going in at the same time another gentleman from up there was coming in the door. And he said, “Hi, my name’s Fred.” And Fred said, “Well, my name’s Fred.” And they started to talking. And he found out we were from Biloxi and what we’d been through and all. He, in fact, sat with us for a long time that evening and talked with us. And when we got ready to go pay our bill, he paid it.

Scull-Millet: Oh, isn’t that wonderful? That’s great. It’s usually the other way around, you know. (laughter) You find out, “Oh, he said you would pay.” (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. We were living with our daughter, and she got a tax break for keeping us.
Scull-Millet: Oh, that’s good. That’s great.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. Every time you turned around, there were people, you know, getting these tax breaks for helping.

Caroline Dunaway: And we stayed with her for a couple of months, maybe three—

Fred Dunaway: Before we went to Europe.

Caroline Dunaway: Well, no, afterwards. And her friend, one of her friends up there was transferred, and she had a beautiful condo right on Alki Beach. And she offered it to us to stay in; we just paid the condo fee and the utilities. We didn’t have any furniture, but our daughter had some extra things. And we brought those over there, and we bought a mattress, and we loved it. We stayed there three months.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, we stayed in Seattle six months, but three of them were in the condo, and three of them were with our daughter.

Scull-Millet: Now, she was here within three days. How long did she stay here, Fran?

Caroline Dunaway: She stayed all week.

Scull-Millet: And then you all went to Pensacola.

Caroline Dunaway: Well, we went to Pensacola and spent the night and all took baths, and we bought ice and all and came back over here, made some phone calls to FEMA.

Fred Dunaway: See, she had—

Caroline Dunaway: And the insurance company and, you know, all that.

Fred Dunaway: She had two vehicles, which we didn’t have. We didn’t have any transportation till she got there. So we had freedom then; we could go.

Caroline Dunaway: And we took care of a lot of things in those two or three days over in Pensacola. We could have stayed in Pensacola, but we felt like we needed to get back and sift through the muck before they bulldozed everything, you know, and we wouldn’t be able to find anything. And as you can see, I found a lot of things that we had. But we stayed. We didn’t leave Biloxi until the middle of October. We stayed with various friends. We tried not to wear out our welcome. (laughter) But we had some friends that, actually, they had their house lifted and put pilings under it. And they lived in our little office out there for six months. So after the storm, their
house was OK because it was up on the pilings. So we ended up staying with them for quite a bit.

**Scull-Millet:** Um-hm. When did you get your FEMA trailer?

**Caroline Dunaway:** Well, that’s a whole other story. They delivered a trailer (laughter) to our lot, but they put our son’s name on it. So he wanted to come back because he could pick up extra work and, you know, see about his job and all. And of course, Fred and I both being retired, we just stayed in Seattle. So he came back, and he was in the trailer on our lot.

**Scull-Millet:** His trailer. (laughter)

**Caroline Dunaway:** Every time he’d call and try to get a trailer, they’d say, “Well, you have a trailer.” And he’d say, “No, I don’t have a trailer. I’m in my parents’ trailer.” So finally, six months later—it was in May, and the storm happened in August. The next May we got somebody at FEMA that said, “Well, let me look into this.” And they discovered that he, in fact, did not have a trailer. So they delivered a trailer to his lot, and we were able to come back then, and we stayed in the FEMA trailer, and he moved into his own trailer, where he is now.

**Scull-Millet:** And how long were you living in the FEMA trailer?

**Caroline Dunaway:** Three months.

**Scull-Millet:** What are the dimensions?

**Caroline Dunaway:** It’s 192 square feet. I figured it out. (laughter)

**Fred Dunaway:** Well, now, all the trailers aren’t the same. Our neighbors are schoolteachers. She is, and she got a schoolteacher’s trailer, which is much larger than ours. And then there were two people that were crippled, another man down the street that had polio. They got big trailers, big doors; they have to have them to get the wheelchairs in there. So all these FEMA trailers are different. Ours is not actually a trailer as you would think. It’s not a manufactured home; it’s actually a trailer that you would go travel—

**Caroline Dunaway:** Camper.

**Scull-Millet:** You would pull with a truck.

**Fred Dunaway:** Yeah, camping. So the trailers all vary, too. And there’s families of four and five living in little trailers like we have.

**Scull-Millet:** So what’s in there?
Fred Dunaway: It’s got it all. The tub’s about half the size of this table here. You can kneel in it, but you can’t sit in it because it’s too small; it’s got a shower.

Caroline Dunaway: If I may, can I read this poem; it was in the paper.

Scull-Millet: Sure.

Caroline Dunaway: It was written by Jesse Hitesman(?) from Pass Christian, Mississippi. It said, “Katrina introduced me to life in a tin can. Ever lived the life of a lowly sardine? Come visit my home to see what I mean. Try to get dressed in a bedroom so small that you can’t bend a leg without bumping the wall. Please don’t open the sofa, whatever you do, or there’ll be only a niche to navigate through. The kitchen’s such fun when you try to cook with barely the space for a recipe book. Then there’s that little old table, for heaven’s sake, where you eat all those meals that there’s no room to make. But taking a shower is the most fun of all. Just don’t step in the toilet when you get out of the stall. While drying yourself, watch out for those bins, or you and the doorknob will be more than just friends.” (laughter) “Don’t get me wrong; I love my trailer. It’s like living the life of a submarine sailor.” (laughter) I love it.

Scull-Millet: That’s fantastic.

Fred Dunaway: If I may, while we’re reading articles, this was sent to me last week by a high school friend of mine. Apparently up in Birmingham, they go back and pick out articles. Read this, Caroline; I can’t read it. This is about Jubilees, and it was about me and my brother participating in this Jubilee, and this was in [1956].

Scull-Millet: Oh.

Caroline Dunaway: This was Friday, August 10, 1956.

Fred Dunaway: And this was published last month.

Caroline Dunaway: Right. And it says, “The season’s first Jubilee had the folks of the eastern shore of Mobile Bay shouting with excitement early Thursday morning. The Jubilee was said by the old-timers to be the biggest in years. Two young Daphne brothers, Frank and Fred Dunaway, noticed the Bay waters were becoming saltier. At 1 a.m. their vigilance paid off as fish swarmed to shore. The Jubilee stretched from Daphne to Fairhope and lasted several hours.

Scull-Millet: Amazing. That would really be fun. I’d like to do that.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, somebody that knew us saw that and mailed it.

(brief interruption)
Caroline Dunaway: — I was with Paine Webber for fifteen years and then worked for Mutual of New York for fifteen years. And they came out in 2002, and they printed a book to recruit women into the business. And they took the top twenty-five saleswomen of our company, and they called my secretary and said, “Send us ten pictures—we don’t want posed pictures, and we don’t want formal photographs—of things that Caroline likes to do.” So she went through and picked out some pictures and sent to them, and there’s my picture.

Scull-Millet: Oh, my goodness. Look at that fish.

Caroline Dunaway: I’m fishing on the back of the boat; I’ve got my shirrtail tucked in. My hair’s a mess; I’m holding up this big, old fish. And right here is my biggest competitor with a formal photograph. (laughter) A beautiful photograph. (laughter) I cried when this book came out. (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: Well, you played the game right.

Scull-Millet: That’s rich. I love it. What kind of fish was that?

Caroline Dunaway: Well, it was not an edible fish.

Fred Dunaway: Jack crevalle.

Scull-Millet: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I’ve seen that written down, but it’s huge.

Caroline Dunaway: I was on the board of directors for the Red Cross in Oklahoma City, and we were living there when the Murrah Building was bombed. So we went through all of that.

Scull-Millet: Were you involved in that in any way in your capacity as military?

Fred Dunaway: I was a civilian then; I was working with a company that was about ten blocks away, but Caroline got an award for her participation in that.

Caroline Dunaway: I didn’t go to sleep for forty-two hours.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, and she started a—right after that happened, all the meals had to be—

Caroline Dunaway: —packaged.

Fred Dunaway: Because they didn’t know what was out there, what these terrorists were up to. But she finally got oil companies in Oklahoma City to contribute to a cookout in the basement of the coliseum. And she pulled it off, and as these people would come in with their dogs and searchers, you got to feed them a hot meal. And, man, it was great, and it was the first one that was approved.
Caroline Dunaway: Yeah.

Scull-Millet: Wow. Where were you when the bomb went off?

Caroline Dunaway: I did 401K plans for—Indian tribes were my main clients in Oklahoma. And the HUD [Housing and Urban Development] office was in there, and we usually had to get a form for the housing authorities that we did business with. And they were in the Murrah Building. And that morning I had an appointment over in Shawnee, Oklahoma, which is about twenty-five minutes away. And my secretary and I drove within a stone’s throw of the Murrah Building and talked about going in there, and this was about 8:30. And we were headed over to talk to the absentee Shawnee Tribe over in Shawnee, Oklahoma. And she said, “Well, why don’t we stop by the Murrah Building and pick up those papers?” And I said, “Oh, that might botch it.” We were trying to get business with this tribe, and I said, “That might botch it if we pick up the papers before we get the contract.” (laughter) So we didn’t go by there, and we went on over to Shawnee, and we got over to Shawnee, and we heard it on the—we were in a meeting room setting up, and a girl came running in. And she said, “I’m sorry.” She said, “Can I turn on that TV?” She said, “My dad works at the Murrah Building, and it’s been bombed.” And that was the first we’d heard of it. Well, they turned it on, and we watched it in horror for, I don’t know, five, ten minutes. And we just turned around and got in the car and came back because I was with the Red Cross, you know, a volunteer.

Fred Dunaway: Do you want to talk?

Scull-Millet: Do you want to take a break?

Caroline Dunaway: Yeah.

(brief interruption)

Fred Dunaway: Well, there was some things on there that would—let’s see. We weren’t stranded after the hurricane. Yeah, you’ve covered these I read.

Caroline Dunaway: Um-hm.

Fred Dunaway: We stayed with a dozen different people, you know. When we finally came back here, had no place to stay.

Scull-Millet: Back to Biloxi.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah. Well, that’s about it.

Scull-Millet: You know what? I’d like to hear what you’d like to see in rebuilding your community and rebuilding the Gulf Coast.
Fred Dunaway: I think they’ve got the right idea the way they’re going at it, but there’s so much dissension among the council. But they have grandiose plans. I think Biloxi could be an Atlantic City, even though I’ve never been there, or I don’t want to say a Vegas—

Caroline Dunaway: Carmel, California, you know, where they’re doing a lot of green area, and I think that’s in the mill, from what I have looked at the plans for the city. And I’m pleased with them. I’m upset with our council people because they won’t agree, and they won’t let us get on them, but here it is a year and a month after the storm, and they still don’t have what their requirements are for raising your house. So how can people go out and build, when we don’t know what the requirement’s going to be?

Scull-Millet: You can’t.

Fred Dunaway: And the problem with that is a lot of people want Biloxi back like it was, and you can’t—

Caroline Dunaway: That will never be.

Fred Dunaway: No. You’re right where you’ve got an opportunity; you’ve got the beach. You’ve got the water. You’ve got the fish, the seafood. You got New Orleans close by; you got Mobile.

Scull-Millet: And let’s not forget Hattiesburg.

Fred Dunaway: And Hattiesburg. (laughter) Caroline went to school there. And I think the bigger your plan, somewhere in between is going to be your happy medium, that opportunity. Vegas can expand forever. You know, they’ve got desert. We’ve got only so many square acres of miles, and I think every inch of it ought to be well thought out. And I know you’ve got a lot of people who are poor, and they lost their homes. And they didn’t have—and the homes were paid for; they were the old homes. You have that everywhere, but if they can get those people—a good example is my son. He lived over on the east side, and a casino wants his fifty by seventy-five foot lot. And so they’ve got a real estate guy going out and buying up first options. In other words, if the casino wants it, he goes through this realtor. So he stopped and asked Hunter what size was his lot, and he told him. And he pulled out his calculator; he said, “Come with me.” He went to the car, and he said, “How would you like $316,000?”

Caroline Dunaway: Just for his lot. All his trees were gone after the storm; everything was just—

Fred Dunaway: He said, “That’s $50 a square foot, and that’s what the casinos are willing to buy when they get it approved.” You know. “They’ve got to have the zoning
and all that, and would you accept that?” And he says, “In a heartbeat.” (laughter)
And the reason behind that, to answer the question, is these people that have lived
down there all their lives and has got no place to go. The casino doesn’t want to get
captured in a trap by saying, “Y’all bought those poor people out.” So they’re offering
them enough money where they can go somewhere else—

**Caroline Dunaway:** And buy a nice house.

**Fred Dunaway:** You know, you give them $300,000, they can go somewhere, and
the casinos are not going to get criticized for ripping them off for their property. If
you can go ahead and carry that throughout those poor areas down there and get these
people somewhere, nice homes, nice cottages or whatever, and then there’ll be a place
for them.

**Scull-Millet:** Exactly. Oh, they’ll be better off.

**Fred Dunaway:** Sure.

**Caroline Dunaway:** Um-hm.

**Fred Dunaway:** Or even outside of the area, across the Back Bay or something. But
those are the kind of things that are going to take place that’s going to help Biloxi.
But it’s going to take time.

**Caroline Dunaway:** And the state legislators just passed a bill that these modular
houses—now, we’ve looked into that since, you know, all this has happened to us,
and the modular houses can be built to FEMA codes. And they’re not like a trailer,
you know, or manufactured home.

**Scull-Millet:** They’re permanent.

**Caroline Dunaway:** They’re permanent, and they’re well made. They’re sturdy, and
Mississippi had a tax that was twice that of buying another house or buying a trailer,
even. And the legislators just yesterday passed a bill to lower that tax. So I think that
there’s a lot of really cute modular homes of Southern cottage style that will be
available to a lot of people now that will be affordable. And I think you’ll see a lot of
that, and I think you’ll see a lot more houses being built back because of that where
now there’s just empty properties.

**Scull-Millet:** Are those homes—consideration has been made for hurricane safety in
those homes, has it not?

**Caroline Dunaway:** Yes.

**Fred Dunaway:** Um-hm, they’re built for—like the outside walls are not two by
fours; they’re two by sixes. And they have to have a certain size piling.
Caroline Dunaway: And they have—what do they call those little angles?

Fred Dunaway: Hurricane clips.

Caroline Dunaway: Clips, yeah.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, they’re built at the factory like that, so. And when they come in, they get inspected, and then they hook them together. And you can do whatever you want to with them.

Caroline Dunaway: We were impressed with them.

Fred Dunaway: Kind of like (inaudible).

Caroline Dunaway: And you can get anywhere from 800 square feet up to 3500 square feet in a modular.

Scull-Millet: Probably go up more quickly.

Caroline Dunaway: Oh, yeah.

Fred Dunaway: You can put them up in two days. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: That’s good. It is good.

Caroline Dunaway: It’s 1:35 and I’ve got a 2:15 appointment.

Scull-Millet: I know. You do. Is there anything that we didn’t get to cover that you would like to have on the record for posterity?

Caroline Dunaway: Just that I am overwhelmed with the generosity and the kindness that has been afforded us, and I just hope that we can pass it on.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, I agree.

Scull-Millet: Well, think about the generosity that you exhibited putting your old neighbors in that dinghy, you know.

Fred Dunaway: Yeah, you got a point. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Yeah. So it’ll make a circle. Well, thank you both so much for giving us—
Fred Dunaway: Well, I’ll add to that; the son of the two older people, when he came back to check his property, his dad’s place and all, he came over and said that they had said we’d saved their lives, so—

Scull-Millet: I don’t doubt it.

Fred Dunaway: — that’s a reward right there.

Scull-Millet: It is, yeah. It truly is. There’s so much more accomplishment and gratification in cooperating than in competing, isn’t there? (laughter)

Fred Dunaway: Isn’t that the truth?

Caroline Dunaway: Yes. There is.

Scull-Millet: Well, thank you both so much for giving us this interview.

Fred Dunaway: Enjoyed it. It was good for us, too. (laughter)

Scull-Millet: Good.

(end of interview)