

OH-3041, Matt Avery, 6-14-2014, WY In Flight

JUNGE: [00:00:00] Today is the -- let's see, have I got your mic on you?

AVERY: Yep.

JUNGE: Yeah. I guess that's OK. OK, good. Today is the 14th of June, 2014. My name is Mark Junge and I'm talking with Matt Avery. We're going to talk a little bit about his aviation or aeronautics class that he had at Campbell County High School. We're at -- where the hell are we?

AVERY: Moorcroft.

JUNGE: Well, I mean -- I think we're in Moorcroft. I know that much.

AVERY: Coffee Cup in Moorcroft.

JUNGE: We're at the Coffee Cup Cafe?

AVERY: Fuel Stop.

JUNGE: OK, so it was confusing to me when you said, "Meet you at the Coffee Cup," because I'm looking all over for the Coffee Cup, and I'm going, Oh, my God, there must be another road east of town, directly east. But this is the Cenex station, the gas station.

AVERY: Yeah, and I don't think they've changed it, but (inaudible) it's always been called the Coffee Cup Fuel Stop, so.

JUNGE: OK. And Matt just [00:01:00] gave me his card here, it says, "Office of Campbell County Commissioners, Commissioner Matt Avery." How long have you been a commissioner?

AVERY: Four years. And I'm up for reelection this year and running for one more term.

JUNGE: Oh, OK. One more term? You don't want to run more than that?

AVERY: You know, in Campbell County it's really hard doing much more than two terms, and I don't know, after I get another term as commissioner, I don't know whether I want to quit being in the political field or go on to be a representative of the state of Wyoming.

JUNGE: Oh, really? Good for you. Now, they say every -- a commissioner is not a very good commissioner if he doesn't have a road built to his house, is that right?

AVERY: Yeah. (laughs) It was already built there before I got it.

JUNGE: You can tell that in your campaign. In your campaign, say, "Look, I already got a road. Somebody built it before me."

AVERY: Yeah, so we're good. [00:02:00]

JUNGE: OK. I want to get a little background information on you, is that OK? When and where were you born?

EVERY: I was born in Sheridan, Wyoming, in 1953, in August of 1953.

JUNGE: August what?

EVERY: Nineteen fifty-three -- August 5th.

JUNGE: August 5th. My son was born August 3, 19-- well, '67, yeah. Fifty-three. I taught at Sheridan College two years --

EVERY: Oh, did you?

JUNGE: -- from '68 to '70, so you were about 15.

EVERY: I was -- I graduated from Campbell County High School in 1972, and I turned 20 in 1973, got married on my birthday.

JUNGE: Why did you leave Sheridan?

EVERY: Well, we didn't live there, I was just born there. Anyhow, I've lived in Campbell County all my life, so. My grandparents homesteaded [00:03:00] northeast of Sheridan, just the end of Montana, back in the late 1800s, early 1900s.

JUNGE: Is that near Decker?

EVERY: Yeah, it's on east of Decker, north and east of Decker there.

JUNGE: Close to the Bighorn battlefield.

EVERY: It was on a kind of -- I don't know if you can visualize it, but it's about halfway between Ashland,

Montana, and Worland, Wyoming. It was 90 miles to Broadus and 65 miles to Sheridan. Anyhow, I always tell people that there's people that live out there who don't even know Custer's been whipped yet.

JUNGE: (laughs) I suppose so. That's coal country out there, isn't it?

AVERY: Well, there is a lot of coal out there, but the state of Montana doesn't really want to do a lot of energy exploration because the west side of the state of Montana's all [00:04:00] environmentally driven, so they pretty much control the capital.

JUNGE: Now, isn't their severance tax bigger than ours?

AVERY: You know, I don't know how their taxes work up there, so I'm just not going to say. I don't know how that is.

JUNGE: I thought one of the reasons why, and this is just my curiosity -- I thought one of the reasons why we had so many coal mines in Converse and Campbell County, and down in Sweetwater County too, was because the taxes weren't as high here in this state.

AVERY: Yeah, and you're exactly right. And I think that's why there isn't a lot of oil exploration that went on up in there, because the taxes -- like when the methane gas was going on, they didn't -- there was so much legal stuff for them, taxes and I don't know what-all else, but anyhow, it

wasn't cost-effective for them to drill for methane
[00:05:00] up there.

JUNGE: Now, were you raised on a ranch?

EVERY: Yeah. My -- I come from a ranch background. My
granddad on my dad's side was a sheep rancher, and he ran
about 4,000 head of sheep --

JUNGE: This was at the place you just mentioned?

EVERY: This is out east of Decker. And then my grandparents
on my mom's side were cattle ranchers.

JUNGE: Gee, how did they get along?

EVERY: They met at a dance, you know, so. (laughs)

JUNGE: Neither one of them said what they were raising.

EVERY: But my parents sold out, they had a small ranch up
there and they sold out in '57, or, no, '58, and anyhow, my
dad went to work for a large cattle company out of
Sheridan, Wyoming, in 1960, called Faddis-Kennedy Cattle
Company, and they had us managing a ranch at Lodge Grass,
Montana, right at the base of the [00:06:00] Bighorn
Mountains. And we were there for three and a half years,
and then they moved my mom and dad down to Little Powder
River, about 40 miles north of Gillette, November of 1963.

JUNGE: So he was like a ranch foreman.

EVERY: He was a ranch foreman, yeah. And the ranch that my
dad managed down at Little Powder River was 40,000 acres

and 900 head of mother cows. Anyhow, my wife and I met in

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JUNGE: Is that -- was that near the LX Bar?

AVERY: No, we were, I suppose, straight through the hills,
probably 30 miles east of LX Bar.

JUNGE: But you know what I'm talking about, though.

AVERY: Yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: And that's pretty country up there.

AVERY: Yeah. My -- actually my granddad's homestead was just
north of the LX Bar buildings, about [00:07:00] five or six
miles.

JUNGE: OK, on Powder River?

AVERY: Yep. Up on the west side of Powder River there, in
the breaks, and that's where my granddad on my dad's side
homesteaded, was right up on top there.

JUNGE: Did you spend much time there?

AVERY: No, he was -- my grandparents were all dead and gone
by the time I came along, and that place had sold, and my
dad was -- he was the baby of 10 kids, and he was born in
1916 up there. My granddad was born in Iowa -- yeah, I
believe it was Iowa. Illinois or Iowa; I think it was
Iowa. And then him and his brother moved from Iowa to
Ellendale, North Dakota, and they were big wheat farmers
[00:08:00] up there.

JUNGE: And how did they get down to Montana and Wyoming?

AVERY: In 19-- 1912, 1913, in there, the market crash and they were -- they had big steam equipment, and anyhow, the bank foreclosed on them, and so they -- my granddad -- and when they had the auction, my granddad made them sell all the steam equipment first, and when they sold enough to pay the bank off, he stopped the auction.

JUNGE: Really? What a story.

AVERY: And they told him that he couldn't do that, and he said, "Yes I can," because he said, "You sold enough to pay the bank, to pay you off," and he said, "The rest of this is mine." And basically what he had left was all horse-drawn equipment, and he put a lot of his horse-drawn equipment on the railroad and sent it to [00:09:00] Miles City, but him and the oldest boy went out to Montana and filed on a homestead there called -- oh, I'll think of it here in a second. There's not even anything there anymore, but --

JUNGE: Was it down in that neck of the woods you're talking about? Southern Montana?

AVERY: Yeah, it was on down the river there. I'll think of it here in a minute. But anyhow, they moved out, and in 1914 they came with teams and wagons from Ellendale, North Dakota, across north of Belle Fourche and, oh, past Alzada

and then they angled down through Trail Creek and up past Recluse, Wyoming, and be north of Recluse [00:10:00] and cross Powder River there.

JUNGE: With a wagon.

AVERY: Moorhead, Montana, was where my dad -- that was the -- Moorhead, yeah. And they crossed the river right there at Moorhead and went up on top the divide there and built a house and barn, and that was in late 1914, and my dad was born in June of 1916.

JUNGE: So he was raised on that ranch.

AVERY: Yeah. He grew up there, he was -- yeah. And then my dad's older sister married Frank McKinsey and he homesteaded there right next to my granddad. And anyhow, Aunt Kate and Uncle Frank, they pretty much raised my dad because he spent more time [00:11:00] over at their place -
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JUNGE: I see. When did your dad pass away?

AVERY: My dad died in December of '85, 1985, there at Kennedy's ranch. And that day I took his position of being ranch manager, and I stayed there until 1991, and we had an opportunity to move down to my wife's parents' place because they were retiring, and so we moved down to their place and started our own ranching business down there.

JUNGE: So you actually had to take over a ranch at 19.

EVERY: No, I was -- I was in my thirties when I took that.

JUNGE: Oh, really?

EVERY: Yeah, I was -- see, I was 20 in 1973, and I got married on my 20th birthday. I was probably 35 when I took over. [00:12:00]

JUNGE: And then you moved to this other place.

EVERY: Yeah, and then I moved -- in '91 I moved down to on the Gray Road, where we're at now, and been there ever since '91.

JUNGE: The Gray Road?

EVERY: Yeah, that's where you was going to come see me, 505 Gray Road.

JUNGE: Oh, that's right, that's right. Well, what was it like growing up on that ranch?

EVERY: Oh, it was -- it was a lot of fun, and I enjoyed it. You know, when you got 40,000 acres, that's a big backyard, and I had great parents and they -- my dad was not bashful about giving a good whipping when you had it coming, you know? But anyhow, I'm glad he did. I'd hate to see what I'd have been like if I hadn't had that, you know.

JUNGE: Really? You think that made a difference?

EVERY: Oh, yeah. I [00:12:59] -- my mom always told me that if you don't have respect for your parents or your elders, then you wind up not having any respect for yourself, and

then you don't have no respect for nothing. And so if you're taught respect at an early age, then you'll have respect for even yourself as you grow older, because without self-discipline, you're -- you don't know where the boundary lines are at.

JUNGE: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

AVERY: I got one sister. She's three and a half years younger than me. She's married and got two kids, and they actually just moved right up in that country where my grandparents' homestead --

JUNGE: Really? Isn't that funny.

AVERY: It's kind of made the circle, yeah.

JUNGE: Well, I would imagine [00:14:00] as the oldest you had a lot of responsibility, especially on a ranch.

AVERY: Yeah, I mean, we had chores. When we got home from school there was chores to do, and I didn't play high school sports because we lived so far from town. My freshman year I boarded in town, and at that time Gillette was only a population of about 3,200 to 3,600 people, and I couldn't stand it. Semester time, I told my folks, I said, "If you want me to get a high school education, you got to get me out of here, because I'm ready to quit. I mean, I just, I don't like town, I don't like no part of it," you know.

JUNGE: You were a ranch kid, and this was a big town for you?

EVERY: Yeah. Well, I just felt closed in, you know. You get up in the morning and look 30 feet and see somebody else looking out a window back at you, you know, and I just didn't like that. I didn't -- now the [00:15:00] town is, you know, 20,000 or bigger, and I, you know, I've spent a lot of time in Gillette as a commissioner, but I wouldn't want to live there, you know.

JUNGE: You tell that to the Gillette people, I suppose.

EVERY: Yeah, I mean, I don't mind telling them that I'm proud of being a country bumpkin and --

JUNGE: Listen, they love that. You know, they don't have anything -- they shouldn't have any problems with that.

EVERY: And I represent -- I represent Campbell County, I don't represent just the city of Gillette. I represent the whole county, and that whole county includes the city of Gillette and the town of Wright, and everybody in between.

JUNGE: How do you -- how do you campaign? I mean, do you just go door to door and shake hands in Gillette and say -- I mean, because that's where most of the votes are, right?

EVERY: Yeah. I (inaudible) I went down to Wright and [00:16:00] thought I could walk that town out in one night, and I wound up spending three nights down there and still didn't get it all covered, you know. And it takes time. I

mean, you're knocking on doors and some people ain't home and some people are, and they take your information and thank you and you move on to the next one, and maybe that person wants to spend some time asking questions and learning -- learning what the issues are --

JUNGE: How did you -- how did you come out in your -- how narrowly or how wide a margin did you have?

AVERY: I was -- when I ran four years ago, I got the most votes of any candidate. There was 13 of us running, and I got the most votes of the 13 candidates, so.

JUNGE: What was your platform?

AVERY: Just character and integrity. [00:17:00]

JUNGE: But were there specific issues?

AVERY: Nope. I told people that I didn't have any certain issues, I wasn't going in with an agenda, but I was honest and I definitely stand up for things I believe in and I don't care whether I'm a minority on the board or not, but there was a couple of guys that, in my growing up here, that taught me -- told me a couple of things, and I've lived by them. One of them was a county agent and his name was Mel Lynch, and he told me, he said, "You never get anything done starting at the bottom and working up." He said, "You got to go to the top and work down." And anyhow, then [00:18:00] --

JUNGE: It's good advice.

AVERY: Then, when I got on -- applied to be on the fire board, and that's a board of seven members, and a fellow, a neighbor told me, he says, "No matter what you do, you're not going to make everybody happy." But he said, "I'm telling you this," he says, "whatever you decide, make sure you can go to bed with it." He said, "If you go to bed and you can't sleep on a decision you made, you made the wrong decision."

JUNGE: OK, and I'm -- we're getting off the track, but I find this really fascinating, because I haven't talked to any political candidates yet. But what happens if somebody says, "All right, Matt, I'll tell you what. I'll vote for that bill that you're introducing to the legislature" -- because that's eventually where you're going to end, right?

AVERY: Yeah.

JUNGE: OK, so a guy comes along and says, "I'll vote for you, but you've got to help me on this," and you don't believe in it, and you go -- then you have to start weight it, right?

AVERY: Right.

JUNGE: And saying, is this important to me or not?

AVERY: It's -- it's [00:19:00] a simple deal. I mean, are you going to be bought off because this guy's going to vote

for you? And what he's campaigning for is against everything that you believe in? I mean, that's a cut-and-dried deal. I wouldn't support nobody on that. And I'd flat tell them that in their face.

JUNGE: Even if you had an issue that was so close to your heart and he was a deciding issue -- a deciding vote?

AVERY: Yep. And if -- I don't believe in selling myself out. And my parents raised me to stand on my own two feet, and sometimes that's not a comfortable deal to be in, but if you can't stand on your own two feet and stand for what you believe in and what this country was made on, then you're nobody. We've got that in the White House right now. I mean, somebody that [00:20:00] tells you one thing and does 10 other different things. I mean, we -- the American people don't need that. The American people need somebody that's got some backbone to stand up and take the lead and do what they believe in.

JUNGE: I take it you're not a Democrat.

AVERY: That's correct. (laughter)

JUNGE: OK, now that we've got that squared away. Well, I wish you a lot of luck in your political career.

AVERY: Thank you.

JUNGE: You're going to have to be county commissioner, though, for how many more years if you --

AVERY: Four more years.

JUNGE: -- if you win this, and you think you've got a pretty good chance --

AVERY: I think I've got a pretty good chance, and I -- I've gained a lot of support from people in Campbell County because I do stand strong, and I've been outvoted several times on different things, but [00:21:00] --

JUNGE: What -- give me an example. I'm kind of curious.

AVERY: Well, one example, and maybe it's not an important thing to a lot of people, but one of them was beer sales at junior hockey league.

JUNGE: That could be a hot issue.

AVERY: And it was. And the people that were promoting junior hockey wanted the beer sales there. To me, it was more important for them to have the beer sales than promoting junior hockey. To me, we have enough events going on with beer sales that we don't need to be adding to it, and, you know, to me, junior hockey is -- you got a team there that are not of legal drinking age, and not that they're out on the floor drinking, but we don't sell beer [00:22:00] at high school basketball games, and we don't sell beer at high school football games, and we don't sell beer at high school rodeos. And so why should we start selling beer at junior hockey leagues, you know? I know this is not a high

school event, but it's still the same thing, and there's a certain thing about morals in this country that I feel that we need to get back to, and this is where I was not popular because I felt like we're not raising the bar or the standards that we live by, we're lowering the bars all the time, and they didn't like that. But I got outvoted. It was a 4-to-1 vote, and that's OK. I sleep at night. I had quite a few people call me and thank me for standing up for what I believe in and standing up for what they believe in, and [00:23:00] --

JUNGE: That was the big issue.

AVERY: It was.

JUNGE: What are Campbell County's big issues now? I mean, to me, and correct me if I'm wrong here, Matt, but to me, the most important issues in Campbell County are the coal mines. The coal mines and the oil wells and the gas wells, methane gas. I mean, why -- why are they messing around with issues like that when they've got a huge issue?

AVERY: Well, and that was just a small issue that I wanted to share with you. But you're exactly right. We've got -- all of our industry in the state of Wyoming is agriculture and oil, gas, coal, and a lot of times agriculture gets leaved out of the equation of being an industry, but it is. And anyhow, [00:24:00] and it isn't just in Campbell

County, but it's affecting the state of Wyoming, it's affecting the whole western states of the United States, and that's all these environmental issues that are attacking us and they're coming at us at all different angles, with the Endangered Species Act and Waters of the U.S. and Clean Air Act and your EPA. They're all coming at us, and they're putting such strains on industry that it's making it really hard for oil, gas, and coal. And if they list the sage grouse, it's going to affect -- that's going to be a drastic effect on agriculture as well. And, you know --

JUNGE: Why would that be?

AVERY: Because they're going to come in and regulate on [00:25:00] how you can graze your place, because you got to have a certain amount of vegetation, certain amount of sagebrush for sage grouse habitat.

JUNGE: Who's pushing that, actually?

AVERY: ESA, Endangered Species Act. And I go back -- I'm the first county commissioner from Campbell County to ever go back to D.C. and sit on the National Association of Counties back there on Ag and Rural Affairs steering committee. The first year we went back there, there was like five of us from the state of Wyoming went there and some of them sit on the Public Lands committee, some of

them sit on the Environmental committees, but this year there was -- there was 11 of us in D.C. this year, and we sit on different committees and we support one another [00:26:00] and we build a relationship with commissioners from all over the United States. So these environmental issues are hot topic not only in the state of Wyoming, but also the western states of the United States and also Arkansas, Alabama, and --

JUNGE: West Virginia. Pennsylvania.

EVERY: And they're all being pushed with the Endangered Species Act, and it's -- there was a meeting this March, this past March, and people are, they said, "We got to do something," you know? And I said, "Well, this is where we need to work together. Shoulder to shoulder, we need to work together." And they said, "Well, that's not as easy as it's said, because my Congressmen are Democrats and yours are Republicans, and they don't want to work together [00:27:00] in the House." And I said, "Then this is where we need to talk to them. This is where we need to say, you know, put your political parties aside and put your shoulders together and get the dad-gum job done." Because fighting is breaking our states, and we're losing control as states. You know, we're going to be mandated by the federal government, and our states ain't going to have no

say. And so -- and that's part of this deal where American Lands Council is pushing to western states to take back federal lands, each state have control over the federal lands within their state.

JUNGE: I want to get back to that. Do you mind if we talk about that some more? Because I love this, [00:28:00] appreciate it. But let's talk about your education. Where were you -- where'd you go to school?

AVERY: I graduated from Campbell County High School in 1972.

JUNGE: OK, now, what were you aiming to do in high school? Were you aiming to go to college? Go back to ranching? What were you -- what was your plan?

AVERY: No, I -- actually, when I hit 16 years old, I'd had all the school I wanted and I just thought it was a waste of time. My dad had to quit school when he was 16 because that was in the thirties, and he worked hard all his life, and he begged me, he says, "Son," he said, "if you never do another thing for me," he said -- he said, "stay in school and get a high school education." He said, "It's all I ask of you." But when I graduated, I was -- that was my freedom day and [00:29:00] I only wanted to go home and work with my dad --

JUNGE: But you did what he wanted you to do. You did what he wanted --

AVERY: Yeah. And that's, you know -- [phone rings]

JUNGE: You can go ahead, if you want.

AVERY: [answers phone; side conversation] [00:30:00] Sorry about that.

JUNGE: No, it's all right. I don't mind. Was your mom big on education?

AVERY: My mom was a schoolteacher, and she was -- it's kind of funny. My mother-in-law, Hertha [Semlik Larson?], graduated from --

JUNGE: What was her name?

AVERY: Hertha [Semlik?] Larson.

JUNGE: How do you spell Hertha?

AVERY: H-E-R-T-H-A. And she graduated from Campbell County High School in 1932, and my mom graduated from Campbell County [00:31:00] High School in 1942, and I graduated Campbell County High School in 1972. And my class was the last class to graduate out of the old high school, and they tore it down and made it into Twin Spruce Junior High.

JUNGE: Oh, that's where it is, or where it was.

AVERY: Where it was, yeah.

JUNGE: OK, so tell me about the aeronautics class. How did you get into it, what was your interest?

EVERY: Well, it was -- you had to -- you had to be a senior in order to take the class. He would not take anybody that was --

JUNGE: Now, who was he?

EVERY: I'm sorry, Bud Mayer.

JUNGE: That's all right.

EVERY: Mr. Mayer was, he was an algebra and flight instructor teacher in high school, and when I was a freshman I [00:32:00] had Bud as a algebra teacher, algebra I, and then I didn't have him again until I was a senior in high school. Flying always intrigued me. I always thought it would be neat to fly. My dad was scared to death to fly. He said, "I flew one time and don't care to fly again."

JUNGE: What was it about flying that attracted you?

EVERY: It was a new way of transportation, and then being up there in the air and looking down --

JUNGE: Had you done any flying at all? Had you had any experience?

EVERY: I rode with -- we had a hunter that flew out one time and he gave us a ride, and anyhow I just thought that was just plum cool. And you could see -- I mean, you could get up and see for miles, you know. I -- part of why I don't like living back east [00:33:00] is too dad-gum many trees back there, you know. But when you can fly, you can get up

and you can see, you know. I even like flying in jets, you know, because you're even higher up yet and you can see so far and --

JUNGE: See patterns.

AVERY: Yeah. And --

JUNGE: So you decided this was a class for you.

AVERY: Yeah, I thought -- I thought, you know, this would be neat. And I -- I didn't realize it at the time, but we did all the ground course in class and we could have taken -- actually, our credit for taking that class would put us through the ground course part of it; we wouldn't have had to retaken that part of it, because that was all in that class. And then, at the tail end of the semester, I want to say [00:34:00] the last two or three weeks, or maybe the last month, we got to go out and fly. And so, there was Rex Brown and Dan [Clausner?] and myself, we was a team that flew with Mr. Mayer. And it was kind of cool, because we had a free hour before that class, and so did Mr. Mayer, and so we'd all go out to the airport, and so we got two hours of flying, while the rest of them only got an hour, and basically they didn't get an hour, because it took, you know, 10 or 15 minutes to get out there, and then you had to do a pre-flight on the plane, and then go out and fly for probably 15 minutes and come back, and put the plane

away and make it back to town so they could make their next class, you know. We got -- we had two hours, so we got [00:35:00] a good strong hour in the air, and we flew all over Campbell County. We flew --

JUNGE: I was going to ask you where you went.

EVERY: Yeah, we went down south of Wright, over to Danny [Clausner's?] folks's ranch down there, the [Clausner?] ranch down there. And then we flew up north, Rex Brown and I both lived north of Gillette towards Broadus, Montana, and so we flew that area --

JUNGE: Flew over to the ranch?

EVERY: Yep, yep.

JUNGE: I bet that was a thrill.

EVERY: It was special. And then we flew to Buffalo one day. And anyhow, Buffalo air field was exactly straight east of the Gillette air field, and so it was kind of neat. Mr. Mayer asked us, he said, "What coordinates do you think you need to set your compass for to go to Buffalo without looking at the map and everything?" And we was kind of [00:36:00] saying, "Well, it would be a little bit northeast, or northwest of Gillette." And anyhow, it was just straight, straight west, you know, and that was cool. And then we flew over Devil's Tower. I had no desire to climb Devil's Tower because I flew over it and I know what

it looks like up there, and I didn't lose anything up there. You know, it's kind of funny --

JUNGE: (laughs) You didn't lose anything up there.

AVERY: No, I just -- I am scared to death to climb things like that, but yet flying doesn't bother me. I mean, as long as I got something around me and I've got --

JUNGE: Even with this up and down and side to side?

AVERY: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah. That don't bother me, and, but just to get up, climb, like, an [REA?] pole -- I worked as an electrician apprentice for a couple of years [00:37:00] after we moved down here, and I was -- I was scared to death climbing up the pole and climbing down the pole. Now, once I got up there and I could get belted off above a cross-arm or a cross-arm base, I'd stand up there and work all day long. Height didn't bother me, because I felt safe having that belt around there. But that trip up and that trip down that pole just scared me to death.

JUNGE: Yeah, because you're saying to yourself, if I make -- this is on me. If I make one mistake, I'm history.

AVERY: Yeah, and you look down and there's -- you got these gaps on your boots that are about yea long and that's the only thing that's holding you in that wood, you know?
(laughs) And I kept mine -- I carried a file and I kept mine razor-sharp. Guy I worked with, he said, "You just

butcher a pole." And I said, "Yeah, but I don't gap out on them, I --" (laughs)

JUNGE: Well, so, you flew with Mr. Mayer [00:38:00] and Danny [Clausner?] and Rex Brown --

EVERY: Rex Brown, uh-huh.

JUNGE: But did any of you become pilots?

EVERY: No. Rex and I actually talked about it after we got out of high school, but, you know, we both cowboyed, and when you're working for \$150 a month, you just couldn't afford too much to be any source of a partner in a plane, you know. But for years after that -- actually, I'll tell you this little story. I smoked from the time I was about 15 years old until I was 32, and after my folks's deaths, and both of their deaths were smoking-related deaths, and anyhow, a doctor told me if I didn't quit smoking, I was a prime candidate for a cardiac arrest. And I [00:39:00] was 32 years old, had a daughter that was 11 years old, and I thought there was more to life than smoking them cigarettes, you know. And while I was going through withdrawals of smoking, I walked, and I'd get up early in the morning and I'd be out there at daylight walking about four miles in the morning, and I'd turn around and walk another four miles at night. But I set goals that, you know, if I quit smoking I could probably get into, like, a

kit plane or maybe a small helicopter. Maybe I could go back and learn how to fly a small helicopter or something, you know. And while I was walking I would be visualizing being up in the air looking at the hills and the train and everything, and that's what helped me quit smoking, even though I didn't get ahead and [00:40:00] achieve those goals, right? But it helped me quit, it helped me -- it gave me a goal to reach out for, so if I was able to quit smoking, I could reward myself with this if I wanted to, you know.

JUNGE: Right, right. You're a goals-oriented person, aren't you? You're going to set a goal, and you're going to meet it.

AVERY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Have you always had that?

AVERY: Yeah, I usually visualize myself being this or that, or doing this or that, and sometimes I've come up short, but, you know, most of the time I'm able to do it.

JUNGE: Yeah. Well, just by talking to you this short time, I can tell you, you're probably -- you're probably right for the legislature. (laughs)

AVERY: Well, I thank you for that. I -- the legislation is a lot more reading than being a commissioner. A commissioner is a -- more of a [00:41:00] hands-on -- I mean, there's a

lot of reading, being a commissioner, don't get me wrong, but -- but when you're reading as a legislator, you're reading bills and how those things are going to read, and sitting on committees, and you got to go in front of other committees, you know --

JUNGE: But isn't this the way to do it, is to do the hands-on jobs, so you know how to work with your fellow human beings?

EVERY: Yeah. And we as counties belong to a state organization called the Wyoming County Commissioners Association --

JUNGE: Did you know Joe Evans?

EVERY: Who?

JUNGE: Joe Evans was the head of that, up until about 5, 10 years ago.

EVERY: OK, he was out of there. Cindy Delancey was director of that when I got to be a commissioner.

JUNGE: He was probably right before her. And then before him, I can't remember the name of the fellow. But anyway, yeah.

EVERY: Pete Obermueller is director of the WCCA now, and -- but we go down in January [00:42:00] or February and we have a winter meeting, our legislative meetings, and that's where we as commissioners, we go through a lot of bills

that we feel that are important to our counties, and we vote on whether we should support those bills or not support them, or maybe stand neutral in them.

JUNGE: How would you effect those bills anyway? By getting in touch with your legislators from Campbell County?

AVERY: It's kind of -- it's kind of interesting on how much the legislatures depend on how the county commissioners stand on bills as how they vote on them. You know, if the county commissioners don't support a bill, more than likely it ain't going to happen.

JUNGE: Oh, so you represent -- you're the core of the county. You represent county opinion. Interesting.

AVERY: And so, now, if the commissioners have a neutral stand on a bill, then [00:43:00] there's probably going to be more debate on those bills. And if the commissioners are in favor of a bill, the legislatures will support it more. And not guarantee that it'll always pass, but -- but there's -- and then we go to -- we come back -- they schedule us -- certain counties are down there for a certain amount of days during -- especially like this coming up year that is a long legislative session, and so, like Campbell County will be down there for maybe four days. And so there'll be a couple of us go down there for the first couple days, and then a couple of us will go down

for the next couple days. We kind of switch off and on. And then we actually spend time in the capitol, sitting as observers in [00:44:00] committee meetings, and then we get up and speak on how -- how maybe some of those bills we feel as WCCA members we support or not support, or whatever. And that helps those committees. And then there's -- it's interesting, what you learn there and how that whole process works. I mean, somebody just don't write a bill and it passes -- it passes the House and then it goes to the Senate. I mean, it'll go -- has to go through the House, and then it goes to the Senate, and then the Senate may send it back to the House again, you know. So it's kind of a back-and-forth deal. And then you've got these committees that those bills have to go through. There was one bill [00:45:00] that -- I can't even remember what I was really sitting on this committee for, but there was actually three bills there, and, but the two that I thought were the most interesting was, and I wasn't really there to say yea or nay on it, but one of them was being able to -- people was able to sell raw milk to customers. And I could not believe the amount of people that showed up and was totally against selling of raw milk. They said, "Oh, we're going to have sick kids," and, I mean, there was the Health Department there, there was a whole string of

people there. And Sue Wallace was the one that was pushing this bill.

JUNGE: To get it -- the get the raw milk bill passed? I mean, against [00:46:00] raw milk, or for?

AVERY: They were against raw milk.

JUNGE: No, but Sue.

AVERY: Sue was for it. But -- and here again is, we've got too much government in people's lives. Now, if you want to drink store-bought milk, you go to the store and you buy pasteurized store-bought milk. If I care to drink raw milk, I should be able to go to my neighbor that's milking a cow and be able to buy milk from my neighbor, and it's my risk of whether I get sick or not. I'm not forcing you to buy raw milk.

JUNGE: But what's the argument against that?

AVERY: But they made it out like it was going to make everybody sick, everybody's going to be buying raw milk. You know, we're in a stage where, you know, people are wanting to get to organic foods and natural-grown [00:47:00] things and beef, you know. People just, I mean, they -- they cry for ranch-raised beef, you know? Because, you know, we don't -- we don't feed our cattle any hormones and steroids or anything like that. I mean, we feed them good ol' hay and our calves are raised -- for growing out

our heifers, we raise them on oats and hay, and it's all natural, you know? And if we're fattening the beef, we buy some corn, oats, and barley, and we mix some oats with that, and we fatten them beefs out on that. The marbling is -- and it got good flavor. You just can't beat the flavor. But I just could not believe that [00:48:00] our society -- and I even get into arguments with our Health Department in Campbell County, because everything should be run through the government, you know, and I think we've got too much government in people's lives. I mean, you know, if I don't want to take a dadgam flu shot, that's should be my business, you know, and if you want one, you can go get one.

JUNGE: Well, there's always the argument that if -- and you know this argument, probably, Matt, but if you don't get a flu shot and you're sick, somebody's going to pay for it, and won't be you necessarily if you don't have insurance. So you're causing us, but the rest of the taxpayers --

EVERY: But here's the other side of it, too. I've seen people get the flu shot and get sicker than hell. And I don't care to go there. I had a good friend, Oh, by golly, gotta have a flu shot. So he went and got a flu shot, and he spent the whole dadgam winter in and out of the hospital

sicker than a dog. [00:49:00] And I've never had a flu shot, and I don't intend to get one --

JUNGE: That's because you're drinking that raw milk.

AVERY: (laughs) Yeah. But, you know, my wife's twin sister is a registered nurse at the V.A. hospital in Cheyenne, and anyhow, for several years she told my wife, "You guys got to get the flu shot, you know, it's really important you get the flu shot." Well, in the last three or four years, she says don't get the flu shot, it's bad for you, don't get it, you know. And so I don't know what to believe, you know.

JUNGE: The jury's still out on this. Well, I would think that the -- what is it, the health institute down in Atlanta? The National Institute of Health? I would think that they'd have a handle -- I think what they -- what I read was that they have isolated a certain strain of virus that this particular flu [00:50:00] acts as, not an -- this is the wrong term, but an antibody. And so they're taking a good guess -- there's all these strains that are affecting you or could affect you, and they're all over the place, but this is the one that seems to be --

AVERY: -- the most deadly.

JUNGE: Yeah, so this one covers that little part of the spectrum, and that's how I always understood it.

AVERY: Well, and here's the other side of the argument is, is we get all these shots, and then we're not building up immunities to different viruses, and so our bodies -- it's just like all of these sanitizers and everything, you know, we're killing bugs but yet we're -- sometimes those bugs are building up bigger things, and then our bodies are becoming less immune. So --

JUNGE: Kind of depends on the particular [00:51:00] situation.

AVERY: Yeah, and I'm not -- and I'm not -- I'm not saying that people shouldn't get the flu shot. I mean, but if I choose not to, that's my business, you know?

JUNGE: Did we get off the track again?

AVERY: We did.

JUNGE: (laughs) OK.

AVERY: (laughs)

JUNGE: So, OK.

AVERY: This plane's not flying very straight.

JUNGE: (laughs) We're a little erratic. We're up around Devil's Tower, and then we're up around --

AVERY: Yeah. (laughs)

JUNGE: OK. And the [Clausner?] ranch, and then we're up in Broadus. OK. So, there probably isn't a whole lot more to tell about this class, or is there? Is this --

AVERY: It was -- not a lot, but we did a lot of different things. I'll never forget the first time we went up and I was the last one to get a hold of the controls, and anyhow, we were flying along, and I was sitting there [00:52:00] in the co-pilot seat, and I had a hold of the yoke and my feet on the pedals, and watching the gauges and looking out the windows, and I just thought this was so cool. And Mr. Mayer says, "You guys ever see a pencil float?" And we said, "Oh, no, we've never seen a pencil float." And so he says, "I'll show you." So he puts this pencil up on the dash, and we climb way up in the air, and we get up there and pretty soon he just pushes the yoke ahead and the whole pencil just comes up off the dash and starts floating back, and I came right up out of my seat and floated right in the back seat with the pencil, you know. (laughs) Anyhow, he observed that I didn't have my seatbelt on, and so he was teaching me a lesson, and he says, "I think we need to buckle our seat, now, don't you, Matt?" And I said, "Yes, sir." (laughs)

JUNGE: That's a cute story. What kind of a guy was he?

[00:53:00]

AVERY: He was -- he was a rasslin' coach. He was the head rasslin' coach, and so he was -- he was very well disciplined, and he reminded me of a military sergeant.

And, but he liked kids, but he didn't put up with any goofing off and stuff.

JUNGE: So would you say he was strict?

EVERY: Yeah, he was strict, yeah. And he was -- and I'll tell a couple more stories, but we were -- we asked him about stalling the plane, what it was like to stall a plane, and he said, "Well, I'll show you." And anyhow, we went up and climbed and hitched it high until she quit climbing, and then the stall light came on and he tipped her down, and he said, "Now, that's one kind of stall."
[00:54:00] And then he said, "There's another kind," and he said -- he said, "This one will get most people," and he brought her clear up in the air and he just let her stall out. Instead of tipping her over like this, he just let her fall back on its tail, and then brought her down, and it was -- I mean, it grabbed your stomach, you know? And he said, "That one is probably the worst one, you know." And anyhow, he always told us, he said, "Now, if you've got a queasy stomach," he said, "don't eat anything." And, well Danny [Clausner?], we'd flown several times and Danny [Clausner?] thought he was doing OK. So he went home and ate a big lunch, and that was the day we did the stalls. And anyhow, he was up front flying with Mr. Mayer, and Mr. Mayer had his arm around the seat and took his finger, you

know, and he could do this [00:55:00], pointing at Danny, and Danny was following (laughs). He was having a hard time keeping things down. But the last story I will tell, and Mr. Mayer said, "I'm going to tell you, boys," he says, "anytime when you get to flying and you get to thinking you're a hotdog," he says, "that's when you're going to pile one of these up." And anyhow, that's when Mr. Mayer, when he died, he was chasing a fox and hung the running gear up in a power line, and the plane burned up with him in it.

JUNGE: Were you around when that happened?

EVERY: I was -- no, well, I was living where we're at now, but that was a devastating day. The kid that was flying [00:56:00] with Mr. Mayer was Joaquin [Myah?], and he was Dudley Mackey's son-in-law. Anyhow, but he's short like I am, and he was the shotgunner, but it broke his neck and he walked I don't know how many miles to a ranch house to get help with a broken neck. By the time they got back there, the plane had burned up and the only thing really visible of Bud was his trophy. Bud was quite a -- quite into team roping, and he had a trophy team roping buckle, and it was in the ashes there.

JUNGE: That was it?

EVERY: Pretty much so. And Dudley Mackey stands well over six foot, and he was supposed to have flown and been Bud's shotgunner that day, and had Dudley didn't have something else [00:57:00] going on that he couldn't go with Bud, he'd have been killed in that wreck also.

JUNGE: But this other guy, Joaquin [Myah?]?

EVERY: Joaquin [Myah?]. He's a [Basco?], and he, several years later, drowned in a lake up in the Bighorns. Him and a buddy got drunk and went up Bighorn and got in a boat, like a canoe or something, and went out there, and they tipped it over and he drowned in that lake. It was ice-cold.

JUNGE: What did you pick up from -- did you pick up any life lessons from Bud? Or was he just another teacher?

EVERY: No, he wasn't just another teacher I respect. I highly respected Mr. Mayer, and -- and he wasn't afraid to set somebody straight. When he didn't believe in what they were saying, he wasn't afraid to set them straight. He wasn't afraid to [00:58:00] call them on the line. He had kind of a dry sense of humor, you might say, but he liked kids. I rassled part of my freshman year, and actually he's the one that got me into rasslin'. I went out for basketball, and anyhow, I got kicked off the team, me and two other kids, because we were -- the coach said we

weren't tall enough. But I know the whole deal was we were country kids and we'd never dribbled a basketball before, and we didn't know what positions were, and we were trying our best to do layups and everything with the rest of them, you know. And anyhow, we just wasn't good enough. And when you're in high school, coaches ain't going to take time to take you from square one and take you through the basics, you know, and [00:59:00] -- especially in Campbell County. In Campbell County, even back in '69 -- '68 and '69, it was very competitive, and if you -- if you didn't have the qualities, they didn't have time for you. And there was no rec center to go to to play with kids your own quality, you know. But anyhow, I went over to -- was practicing in another gym, but I went over to the high school and I was showering up, and Mr. Mayer was down there in the shower room for some reason, and he said, "What are you doing here, Matt?" And I said, "Oh, I just got kicked off the basketball team for being too short." He laughed, and he said, "Well, why don't you go out for rasslin'?" And I said, "Well, I'd probably be too short for rasslin' too." You know, I was really mad, and he laughed harder, and he said, "Come on, Matt," he says, "I'll get you [01:00:00] a warm-up uniform." So we went in the storeroom and he checked me out everything. The only thing I had to

do was get shoes, which I went and got the next night. Anyhow, but I was so homesick. And they would have elimination nights on Wednesday night, and so if you was going to make it to compete on the weekend, you had to win against your opponents on Wednesday night. And there was two other kids in my weight class. I rassled 103 --

JUNGE: Hundred and three?

EVERY: Hundred and three, yeah.

JUNGE: I didn't know they went that -- I think -- I thought 98 or 100 --

EVERY: There was a -- there was a 98 weight class, too. But, and I -- Rex Brown, he was my best friend, and he was in that weight class, and Dave [Morshan?] was was, he was like a [01:01:00] daddy longlegs spider, he was tall and skinny, but he was in that weight class. And I could -- any night of the week, I could whip them, but I wanted to go home on weekends, and so Wednesday nights I'd let myself get whipped and Bud, he said, "What's going on, Matt?" And I said, "What?" And he said, he said, "You can whip these two other guys," he said, "any night of the week," he said, "but Wednesday nights." And I said, "I want to go home." And anyhow, he laughed and he said, "Well," he says, "I'm not going to -- I'm not going to force you," he says. But

anyhow, he says, "You're a better rassler than that." But
I --

JUNGE: Did that change your -- change your habits around it
at all?

AVERY: No, it didn't. And I had a hard time with rasslin',
and I'll tell you this is, I started school in Lodge Grass,
Montana, on the Crow Indian reservation. And anyhow, I got
myself whipped so many times by Indians. There'd be two or
three of you -- two or three of them, and they would gang
up on you, and I'd go home with bloody noses and black eyes
and my shirt ripped and split lips. I mean, it was not
pretty. And then I learned to run. And then I finally
made some friends with a couple of guys that was in my
class, white guys, and we decided that we was done running.
And we fought. And I'm talking first through halfway
through fourth-grade year. And we -- we'd take as many as
six or seven Indians at a time, and that's all I knew, was
how to fight. And so, [01:03:00] when I went to rasslin',
if somebody put their hands on me, all of that came back,
and I never liked anybody putting their hands on me, and I
still don't like nobody putting their hands on me. You
know, if you put your hands on me in an aggressive manner,
I just come unglued, you know. But I know it was a sport
and I tried to make it as a sport, but I couldn't get over

that part of not liking somebody putting their hands on me, you know.

JUNGE: Well, that kind of attitude would have made you a pretty good wrestler, I would think.

AVERY: It would've, yeah. I was a junior in high school and I'd take PE class in my junior year, and John Alberta, he was a very strict coach.

JUNGE: Who was this now?

AVERY: John Alberta. And I highly respect the guy.

Actually, I was scared to death of him, to start with. But when I got to know him, if you put out [01:04:00] over 100 percent for him, he'd let you off just about anything, you know. But if you slacked off, then he was on your case, you know. And we had to do six weeks of rasslin' in high school, and he asked the kids that were rasslin' to step forward. And so I had it in my mind that it was the kids that were rasslin' that year, you know. Well, I hadn't rassled for two years, and so I never stepped forward. And there was this kid in my class, and I won't mention names, but he was the same weight I was, same height, same -- I mean, it was just, other than facial features, we was about the same. And anyhow, so I rassled him -- we'd get 10 different sets, and each time we did, I pinned him. And anyhow, the last time I pinned him, he just flew mad and he

came up off the mat and hauled off and [01:05:00] kicked my right square in the temple and knocked me colder than a wedge, for just a few seconds. When I came to, I remembered what happened and I grabbed him by the windpipe with one hand, and I went to the mat with him, and I had this jacked back and I was fixing to close both of his headlights. And Alberta, he told me, he said, "Avery, out in the hall." And he told this other kid, he said, "You go rassle with so-and-so over there." And so I went out in the hall and he came out in the hall behind me, and he just slammed me up against the lockers out in the hallway there. And I thought, Holy buckets, I'm really going to get it, you know, because he wouldn't tolerate fighting. And anyhow, he says, "You've rassled before, ain't' you?" And I said, "Yes, sir," and I said, "when I was a freshman in high school." And he says, he said, "Why didn't you step ahead the other day when I asked [01:06:00] you to?" And I said, "Well, I thought you wanted the kids that were rasslin' this year." And he said, "No," he said, "I meant any kid that's got any knowledge of rasslin', because," he says, "I don't know a whole lot about it." And he said, "I'm depending on you guys to teach these others how to rassle. Now," he said, "you go down and shower up, put street clothes on," and he said, "come back in," he said,

"all you got to do is take your boots off to get on the mat," and he said, "you're going to be a coach these six weeks," he said. I didn't have to run laps, I didn't have to do calisthenics. Me and about four, five other kids, all we done was walked around and coached these other kids on how to rassle and stuff. But, you know, he -- you know, he took care of kids that were -- that were achievers, you know.

JUNGE: Was he under Coach Mayer, then?

AVERY: No. He was -- the PE class [01:07:00], physical education was totally separate from the rasslin' program, you know.

JUNGE: So Bud got you into wrestling, but he couldn't keep you in.

AVERY: No, no. And then once I got to driving back and forth to high school, I -- soon as that school bell rang at 3:00 in the afternoon or 3:30, I was out of there.

JUNGE: Yeah, yeah. Well, let's see --

AVERY: But Bud was -- he was a guide at P Cross Bar Ranch out north of Gillette there, Marion and Mary Scott own that place and they did outfitting. And anyhow, I was asked to guide for them, and so I did, and Bud Mayer was a guide there, and so --

JUNGE: Did he teach you some stuff?

EVERY: No, but we got to tell some stories and stuff, you know.

JUNGE: How much older was he than you?

EVERY: [01:08:00] I'm going to say that Bud was probably late twenties, early thirties when he taught me.

JUNGE: So he was not quite a whole -- well, maybe a whole generation more. Older than you, I mean.

EVERY: Yeah. He was -- I was like -- when he coached me, I was 15, and so he was --

JUNGE: Did it surprise you that you could take an aeronautics class at CCC, Campbell County Community? I mean Campbell County High School?

EVERY: I just thought it was something that went on in every high school at that time. I didn't know that we was the only one, you know. And actually, until Patty called me the other day, I didn't know -- I thought that that was something that was taught in a lot of schools around the state, you know. And, but my folks had to sign off on a waiver, you know, so if something happened flying, that the school district wasn't liable, you know.

JUNGE: How many kids were in the class?

EVERY: I don't know, [01:09:00] probably eight or ten, I suppose.

JUNGE: So not everybody took this class. I wonder what the type of person was that took Bud's class.

AVERY: You know, and he taught this class the year before I had taken it, and so --

JUNGE: It started in '66, I think.

AVERY: Yeah, and this was in -- this was spring of '72 when I took it, you know, so he had taught a lot of kids and, you know, I just don't who-all around -- you might talk to -- if you're going down to that flying -- you might talk to Joel Ohman, he lives down there on the [Clark Ellen?] Road also.

JUNGE: Yeah, yeah, I was going to talk to him anyway.

AVERY: He's got some history. He's kind of a history buff, Joel is, and he'd be a good one to ask. [01:10:00]

JUNGE: I talked to his brother Victor, lives in Glenrock.

AVERY: And Joel -- Joel was ahead of me in high school.

JUNGE: Do you know that Victor and a friend of his in Glenrock impersonate the Blues Brothers?

AVERY: Oh really? (laughs) I can see that, yeah.

JUNGE: Next time you see Victor, or if -- you know what he looks like?

AVERY: No. Does he look a lot like Joel?

JUNGE: I don't know, I've never met Joel. But there'd be a little -- you know, as a politician, if you knew something

about him, you could shock the heck out of him. But of course he's not from Campbell County, he's from Converse, but they say -- now here's a little trick I heard, and you tell me if I'm wrong about this, but if a politician, and I mean that in the politest sense of the term, is running for office or he's out after he's been elected and he's meeting his constituency and he can't remember the name of the person, he'll just come up to them and say, "Hey, how's your back?" And the guy'll say, "Oh, you know, it's better." And then he'll know, see, that you know him.

[01:11:00] Well, 90 percent of the people have back problems, right?

AVERY: I've never used that one, but --

JUNGE: Try that some time.

AVERY: Yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: See if that works.

AVERY: I recognize faces, and I --

JUNGE: Do you remember names?

AVERY: I really have a hard time -- I'm getting better about names, but I'm not really good -- I'm not real good at it. You know, I think I was married for six months before I remembered my wife's name, but -- (laughs) I just mean it as a joke. (laughs)

JUNGE: It was "Hey, you," right? Yeah, right. I know about this joke. Well, OK, so we've pretty much covered Bud. How did -- this class that you took, did he come in, did he lecture and then give you a book and say, "OK, you're going to pass the test if you read the book," or --

EVERY: We had the flight -- the ground course flight manual that you would take if you was going out to apply for a private pilot license and you have to take that ground course. It was the same book, and it was -- and I can't remember chapters or sections that you had to -- and we would do a chapter or a section, whatever they called it then, and then we had -- he'd ask all sorts of questions and give a test on it and quizzes, and the instrument panel, every gauge had a name, and he said, "I don't want to -- that thingamadoo over here to the left of the altimeter," he said, "it's got a name," and he said, "you need to know what it is." And so we studied each piece of the instrument panel and --

JUNGE: Did he make it known to you that their lives depended on this?

EVERY: Yeah, yeah. And it was -- and he said it, and he was real strict about it, you know, and I don't blame him, you know. And then we -- we didn't have [01:13:00] flight simulators, and so he'd have us get up and walk around the

room with our arms out like this, and we're circling the desk and he's the control tower, and so we'd have to call in on the radio and tell him what our plane number was, and he'd make us circle the tower a few times and then he'd give us OK to come in on the strip.

JUNGE: That's hilarious.

AVERY: And we had to --

JUNGE: I wish I could have had a picture of this.

AVERY: And we cleaned the room out, you know, we had -- took desks and we had a runway and the tower was kind of in the center, and we'd go around, and then we had to come in a certain direction on the runway and it was --

JUNGE: (laughs) Did he lecture? I mean, did he stand up and put stuff on the blackboard?

AVERY: Oh yeah, yeah. And then, you know, [01:14:00] he'd draw pictures of, you know, what gives a wing lift, you know. He said it isn't so much the wind going underneath the wing, he said, is that it's the wind that's coming over the wing that provides the lift. And, you know, I always thought that the biggest part of it was the wind coming under it and --

JUNGE: Pushing it up.

AVERY: -- pushing it up.

JUNGE: But yeah, no, it's -- that's a hard concept to learn.

EVERY: It is, it is. And then understanding the purpose of the flaps and then, you know, your air speed and --

JUNGE: Did you -- how did you do in the class?

EVERY: I carried an over-90 average. I mean, I didn't have no problem with it, you know. It was --

JUNGE: How about the rest of your class?

EVERY: I would say it was all -- I think there was only, maybe only one kid in there that didn't fare as well, but I think we were all in that above-90 percent [01:15:00] percentile.

JUNGE: But this was something that you were interested in --

EVERY: Yeah. It's kind of like record and accounting and bookkeeping. I took that for two years and I carried a 98 average in that, you know. But it was stuff that I understood and made sense, and the teacher let me go at my own pace, so I was -- I was probably six to eight weeks ahead of the rest of the class, because I'd stay down and the stuff was, just made sense, you know, and I'd go down and put all the -- all the -- and back in them days things were done on a ledger, you know, so we had to write it all out in the ledger, had to put the headings in, and separate your checks out into what files you wanted, you know, like it was for ranch expense or was it capital or was it, you know, what it was --

JUNGE: Those courses were [01:16:00] sort of oriented towards ranch kids?

AVERY: It was -- it was -- we had all sorts of businesses. I mean, we did -- but I'm just using that for an example, you know. But now we got -- we got Quicken program, and so basically it's already set up, you know.

JUNGE: Right. I was going to ask you about Campbell County High School, but are we done with Bud now? I mean --

AVERY: Pretty much. I can't think of anything else, other than you might, if you get to see Joel, I'd talk to him tomorrow.

JUNGE: Who?

AVERY: Joel Ohman.

JUNGE: Oh, Joel Ohman, yeah. He was in the class with you?

AVERY: No, he was -- he was several years older than me, but he might have -- I don't know for certain, but he might have taken that class. But he flies. He's got his own plane, he lives down on the [Clark Ellen?] road there.

JUNGE: Why don't you -- eventually, wouldn't it help you as a county commissioner to have a little private plane, a Piper Cub, and get around the county?

AVERY: I suppose it would, but, you know, I have [01:17:00] had enough different things in my life, you know. I used to be into motorcycles and --

JUNGE: Oh really?

AVERY: -- and I -- I was a dream guy, and I got into different things, and I don't know whether my wife would stay with me if I got into a different one or not, but --

JUNGE: But you could handle it? Do you think you could handle it?

AVERY: You know, I question, you know, because I'm 61 years old, and so I question, you know, can I still think fast enough to do all of that and --

JUNGE: You're a smart guy.

AVERY: -- and I, you know, and a lot of times there's no room for error up there, you know, and, you know, and I farm and ranch and I know my farm equipment has breakdowns, and, you know, you can't park one of them planes up there in the air and walk off and leave it. [01:18:00] (laughs)

JUNGE: Well, where's -- now, where's your ranch at?

AVERY: Twelve miles west and a little bit north of here.

JUNGE: Is that why -- that's the Rosette address that you gave me earlier. That's why, when I followed your directions, I would have got there. Rosette, is that even a town, or is it just a --

AVERY: Yeah, there's a -- there's a big elementary school there and there's a post office, there's two bars, one of them is a topless bar, which I'm not allowed to go to.

JUNGE: Now, wait a minute. Is this because of your constituency or your wife? (laughs)

AVERY: And my wife. I'm a volunteer firefighter, I've been involved in that for 38 years, and my wife told me when they started that topless joint down there, she said, "If they have an EMS call down there, you're not going." And to this day I've never gone in there. [01:19:00]

JUNGE: Well, maybe someday it'll be a casino.

AVERY: Yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: Rosette, is that near the Wyodak mine?

AVERY: It's this side of -- it's about, oh, I'm going to say probably a good 8 or 10 miles this side of Wyodak.

JUNGE: This side of it, yeah, OK.

AVERY: If you're going -- if you go -- if you're going back to Gillette, you're going to spend the night in Gillette?

JUNGE: I think so, yeah.

AVERY: Well, instead of taking the interstate, just take -- just take Highway 51 back into Gillette, and you'll go --

JUNGE: And it'll come under, or -- oh, no, no, I just keep going on it.

AVERY: You just keep going, and you'll go right through Rosette. The speed limit's 40 miles an hour --

JUNGE: So be careful.

AVERY: Uh-huh.

JUNGE: Word to the wise. OK, I will.

AVERY: But anyhow, before you -- halfway between where you get on 51 in Rosette, there will be that sign that says [Gray Road?], and that's where I'll turn off and go home.

JUNGE: OK, well, you know, [01:20:00] my wife works in the legislature.

AVERY: Oh, does she?

JUNGE: Yeah. She's -- I call her the Xerox queen.

AVERY: I see. (laughs)

JUNGE: She runs the Xerox machine, and she's been doing that for 10 years since she retired.

AVERY: Stay busy.

JUNGE: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, they take those -- well, like you say, the process is complicated, and it's not as easy as it looks. You have to -- when you're working alongside her, I suppose you're pulling papers, collating papers for a particular bill, and then you're collating papers for a particular amendment to that bill, and then an amendment to the amendment, and they all have to get out. They have runners that take them out to people like, you know, if you're in the legislature they'll be serving you. And those people are back there, you know, that's -- it seems to me like that's the hub of what's going on, is LSO. Although you're doing your thing as a legislator to talk to

other people and to look at things and read things, they're back there getting all this stuff for you. And that's what she's been doing, but I don't know how much more -- how many more years she's going to do that. [01:21:00]

EVERY: I just found it interesting on how all that works, and you sit up there and look down on the House side or the Senate side and watch them debate a bill and all. But then, when you go to these committees, and they're in little bitty rooms, you know. I mean, I can't believe how small they are, and you crowd 15, 20 people in this room, you know, and some of them are reporters, some of them are just wanting to hear what's going on, some of them are actually there to --

JUNGE: Testify, or --

EVERY: Yeah. And so, those committees, a lot happens there, because they kind of get a feel whether this thing's going to be a good bill to go on with or not, you know. And then some of them will say, "You know what? I'm going vote for it because I want to see how this [01:22:00] is debated on the floor." And so they'll let that bill go through the committee and let it be debated on the floor, you know.

JUNGE: Even though they might catch hell for it.

EVERY: Yeah, or know that it's going to get defeated anyway.

JUNGE: What's the toughest situation you've been in as a county commissioner?

AVERY: The toughest? You know, people say I'm crazy, but I like it. I honestly like it. And --

JUNGE: Well, you like people.

AVERY: Well, and most of the phone calls I get, I get -- in four years, I can probably count on one hand the amount of people who called up that were really irritated about something that we did or did not do, one of the two, and, but I would say the biggest percentage of the people are -- need -- are asking for some direction on where they can get some answers, you know. And we as commissioners [01:23:00] don't have all the answers, but we have different departments in our county that handles different things, and so -- and one of our biggest departments is Public Works, and so you can put them in touch with a certain person in Public Works that's going to have a certain knowledge or expertise about what these people are wanting to find out about, you know. And, you know, so it's -- it's really not rocket science, it's just -- it's just helping these people get answers. And then, you know, I tell them, you know, "Here's who you really need to talk to, but I'm going to tell you what." I said, "I'm going to give you a couple of days, but I'm going to talk to that

same person myself and ask him the same question, and I'm going to ask him if you -- if you called him or not. And then, you know, if you don't get a satisfactory answer [01:24:00] out of them, call me back, because I'll have -- I'll have what they told me, you know." And so a lot of people -- I mean, they do make that call, because they know that I'm going to be calling in a day or two to find out if they called or not. And then, you know, a small percentage of them maybe think, Well, it wasn't that big a deal, you know, so they won't call, you know.

JUNGE: Well, what power would you have over them as a commissioner? Was their job beholden to you? You guys?

EVERY: Well, and I don't -- we as commissioners don't lord it over a department. I mean, it's -- but the thing of it is, is if, say -- say one of the engineers in the Public Works department was negligent on getting this person some answers or the customer service [01:25:00] part of it was really lax, then we would call his boss in to our office and say, "You know, here's an issue and you need to be aware of it," but as far as us going down there and scolding this guy ourselves, no. We bring that director in --

JUNGE: No, you're what they call the power behind the throne.

EVERY: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But it's, yeah.

JUNGE: Interesting how these politics work. Well, when is your election coming up?

AVERY: We have a primary in August, and I can't remember exactly what date it is, but about the middle of August.

JUNGE: How much time are you going to be able to spend on this? I mean, isn't that part of your -- you've got a ranch to run, right?

AVERY: Yeah. I'm -- I'll tell you, I'm very blessed. My daughter and son-in-law share their ranch business with us, and my son-in-law works for the [01:26:00] -- because he has to work off the ranch to help provide a living, and he works for Belle Fourche pipeline, and he's a good worker and he's -- in a short time they've moved him up into a supervisor position. But my daughter is a very strong-minded young lady and she knows that ranch like the back of her hand, and so she runs the ranch, and when I'm home I ask her where I need to fit in at. Because you can't have -- I mean, only one can be the boss, and she's there 100 percent of the time, and I'm not. And so --

JUNGE: Can you make a living as a county commissioner?

AVERY: Not really. It pays \$3,200 a month. I mean, if you wanted to live on a shoestring, yeah, you could do that. [01:27:00] But I put in 25 to 35 hours a week going to

meetings, and it isn't just the commissioner meetings; we have workshops, we have department meetings, we have --

JUNGE: So this is all part of this 25 to 30 hours, or beyond that?

AVERY: Well, it's all part of it, and some of it beyond all of that too, because you'll have a coal company say, "You know, we're having this and this going on and we'd like to have you commissioners be our guest," you know. And so, you know, coal pays for a big percentage of our tax base, and so it's in our best interest to be there and not -- I mean, we still protect our citizens of Campbell County, but we also help represent the coal industry at the state level and stuff, you know. [01:28:00] But, and what I'm saying is that, as -- and I'll just use this for an example, there's a coal mine wanting to move a county road, and they had this one spot all picked out. They never told us that it was going to a small ranch, and it was going to divide this ranch in half, and they didn't tell us who those owners were. And so we was all for this road relocation until the owners of this property were notified, and then they called us as commissioners, individual commissioners, and told us what their issue was, and so we went back to the coal company and said, "You know, we're not happy with you dividing this ranch in half. Those people don't want

your road through the middle of their place. We're not in the business of condemning land and forcing roads through places. [01:29:00] And so we're asking you to take your road and put it over on Forest Service land." And they begged us not to do that because they didn't want to deal with the Forest Service, and we made them go across Forest Service land because we were not going to jeopardize somebody's private property just because of a road, you know.

JUNGE: Did you get the -- did they get the road built?

EVERY: Yeah, they're working on it right now. It's the Mackey Road down south there.

JUNGE: The what?

EVERY: Called the Mackey Road.

JUNGE: So they did have to deal with the Forest Service. And they did it, apparently, successfully.

EVERY: Yeah. It just takes longer.

JUNGE: Well, you know, it seems to me like --

EVERY: Instead of just talking to you, they got to go talk to 14 different other people, you know.

JUNGE: Right, right. Well, but you know, you've got a constituency out there, and it seems to me like a coal company, in their management practices, would say to the guy who designed the road, "Now, who owns the property on

this?" You know, and take a look at that. [01:30:00] It seems to me it'd be pretty logical. Why would I blast a road through your ranch if you're against that road? I mean, you know, you're going to -- I know you're going to raise hell. Did they just think they could bulldoze their way through?

EVERY: Well, and I don't -- and I don't know -- surely they knew, because they had to do -- they had to do --

JUNGE: Environmental assessment?

EVERY: Yeah, and then they had to do who owns that property -
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JUNGE: Oh, an -- to go through the abstract. A title search.

EVERY: Yeah. And, you know, you'd think that they would -- they would have had to know, but they had -- they had a guy, and I'm not going to mention names here, but they had a guy that was a property owner down there and a rancher, and anyhow, he kind of led to believe that this was all his place, you know, and this was a good idea, having this road go right up through here. Well, come to find out he's running his cows on these people's property, and they ain't charging him any [01:31:00] lease, and they're not wanting any lease. But they also don't want the dad-gum road running through them. But he -- then he came back when we told him no, we're not going to force that, we're not going

to make that road go up through there, we're going to -- you're going to have to go through the Forest Service. Well, he comes to us and he says, "Well, that's going to add 10 more minutes to my drive time to get to the other side of my ranch." And I said, "Then just get up a little earlier in the morning, you know?" And I said, "We just ain't going to do this, you know?" And of course I probably lost his vote in the process, but --

JUNGE: (laughs) Well, but you're -- you go back to your original statement to me, you know. You've got to be able to live with yourself and sleep at night, you know? And you know what's right.

AVERY: Now, if you lived in Nebraska and you had a couple sections of land and you didn't know until the last minute you were notified that they're going to put a road through the middle of your place, I mean, it was a family homestead, you'd be a little bit upset, you know? [01:32:00] And, but, and it was a place that you and your family went hunting every fall, and you enjoyed camping out there and everything --

JUNGE: Well, I'll tell you something that kind of bothers me, and I've heard a little bit of the other side of this story, is that there's a -- there's a thing called a fence-out law. You know about that.

AVERY: No.

JUNGE: Well, if somebody's -- in the old days, if somebody's cattle got in and tromped your wife's flower garden and her vegetable garden and just trampled it to hell, that wasn't their fault. You were supposed to fence them -- those cattle out. They didn't have to fence them in.

AVERY: That's -- and that law is still in effect today.

JUNGE: It is? Now, here's another thing. We've got oil under our property. We have eight and a half acres, but we're part of a subdivision that was created, and there's a -- what do you call these, a community agreement about not building certain things or doing --

AVERY: Oh, you got like a homeowners' association.

JUNGE: A homeowners' association. It's ineffective.

[01:33:00] It's practically -- well, it's defunct as far as I'm concerned, but it's still there. Now, these people -- the guy next to me has got 10 acres, and the guy next to him has 10 acres, and I had eight and a half because I'm not a corner and there's right-of-ways and they need to put the roads through. So --

AVERY: So you lost some land because of that.

JUNGE: A little bit, but, you know, I don't care, I'm not a land guy anyway. I mean, this is a gentleman's -- this would be a gentleman farmer, or a gentleman rancher, but I

don't have any horses, I just have the property. Because like you, we didn't want people looking over our shoulder. We were tired of that. So anyway, there's oil under this property, there's oil under other people's properties, and the guy behind me, Holmes, he's a big name in that county, he calls me up and he says, "We want to get together as a group of people, and we have this lawyer who's willing to give us a discount. He'll work for us to talk to this oil company, and they'll get us a -- they'll get us a little bit of money for whatever acreage we have, and it's just the option [01:34:00] to lease." And we said, "Sure, go ahead." I signed the -- not everybody signed it, but a lot of guys signed this agreement, and the agreement I read later. And in the agreement it said, and I read the fine print, it said, "You will help pay for transportation costs for the oil if we drill on the property." Guy's got 20 acres north of me, see. They probably put it on his land, but they obliquely drill or suck that oil out of my property. So they knew that, and they were going to give me a little something, but the agreement called for me to pay for the transportation of the oil, to help. Who knows what help means. The other thing is, I was supposed to help, as a landowner, market -- I had to pay part of the marketing cost. And I thought to myself, Wait a minute.

And I asked this lawyer about this. I said, "Does that mean that if the company hires a marketing person in New York City and they got an office in some skyscraper, that I'm having [01:35:00] to pay her salary?" And he said, "Basically, yeah." I went, "Oh my goodness." And so, it's only good for a certain length of time; I can't tell you whether it was three or five years. But it doesn't matter, because they can come on to my property as long as they're 350 feet away from my house and put a workover rig right there. They can drill, they can bring their trucks in, they can make noise, they can flare, they can do anything they want to do, because even though I own -- not I, but in common we own the mineral rights, they can do what they please, if they pay you a trespass fee. And I'm going, This is like this fence-out law, you know. We cause problems to your house, or to your property, that's -- that's tough luck, you know. And it -- you could -- it seems like you could say, "Look, I own the mineral rights, I own the land. You can't come on my property, anywhere near it." And they're going, "No, we can. We're the oil people. We're the minerals people."

EVERY: And they [01:36:00] -- what do they call that? It's -
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JUNGE: Like an eminent domain thing?

EVERY: Yeah, and the railroad has that same right.

JUNGE: Right. Yeah, they're a checkerboard all along here.

EVERY: And most -- it would have to get pretty demanding before an oil company would come in there and do that, I would think. I mean, it would have to -- I mean, there would have to probably have to be a big pool of oil there that they was really wanting to get.

JUNGE: Well, they track it.

EVERY: But they -- but with horizontal drilling, they can back off here, you know, a mile and horizontal drill underneath your house, and you won't even know it. And, but they have to log where they're at in there, so if your minerals are being tapped, then you get a royalty off of that.

JUNGE: Oh, sure. What I'm --

EVERY: But I'll tell you what I'm dealing with right now. There's a rig on [01:37:00] us right now, and we own 100 percent of the surface and 50 percent of the minerals, and BLM owns the other 50 percent. The BLM has any sorts of interest, they have rule over the surface. I mean, they come in and they tell everybody what to do on the surface, and that makes me mad, because it's my surface. I'm paying the taxes, I work the land --

JUNGE: Wait a minute. This is your surface?

AVERY: My surface, yeah.

JUNGE: And why can they tell you what to do with your surface?

AVERY: Because they own -- they own part of the minerals, and it's called a split estate. And anytime in a split estate, when the federal government has any of the minerals, they have complete say about the minerals, they have complete say about what's going on on the surface.

JUNGE: Well, is this -- this isn't a cooperative thing. I mean, this is like you have -- you run your cattle on a large piece of ground and part of that's [01:38:00] BLM. Is that it? No?

AVERY: No. I own 100 percent of the surface. In 1916, they quit letting minerals go with homesteads, or 1914, 1914.

JUNGE: Somewhere in there.

AVERY: But 19-- I can't remember, I think it -- I can't remember exactly.

JUNGE: Yeah, I know what you're talking about.

AVERY: But anyhow, the federal government kept all the minerals after that period of time. Well, like this place that we're on right now. It was a homestead that was proved up on after that period of time, or part of it was proved up on after that period of time. A large part of our place has got private minerals, but there's -- a small

part of it's got BLM. So it was a piece of land that was not really homesteadable, and so [01:39:00] anyhow, that later got bought, but the minerals stayed with the government.

JUNGE: Well, under the land that they owned, not --

AVERY: So, take this table right here, and I own this table, but anything underneath this table belongs to the government. Or if they own any percentage of what's underneath this table, they have compete say of what's underneath this table --

JUNGE: That part of the table.

AVERY: Any -- on us, right now, it's an undivided interest in these minerals. There's like 120 acres, so say this is 120 acres, there's not a certain part of this table that has BLM minerals, it's an undivided interest. So that means no matter where they drill on this table, the government gets a percentage of the oil, I get a percentage [01:40:00] of the oil, but where they get a percentage of it, they control what goes on down here and they also have complete say on what goes on on the surface. In other words, they got to have --

JUNGE: Access?

AVERY: -- access; they got to have say in how the road is made; they got to have say in making sure that there's a

sage grouse study, there's an archaeological study, grass has got to be studied --

JUNGE: Water.

EVERY: And then they got to study to see whether there's any raptors -- raptor nests. If there's any raptors' nests within a half mile, they can't drill between January and June, or end of June, in there somewhere. And anyhow, they [01:41:00] found a raptor's nest and they made this location this past winter, but they couldn't drill on it until just now, because of a raptor's nest.

JUNGE: So that -- that's a pain in your neck.

EVERY: It's a pain in everybody's neck, because down south, the ranchers down there -- here's a good example. When the methane came in several years ago and they drilled all them wells down there and made all these roads, and they're gravel roads, OK? This oil company come in, now, and they're wanting to make an oil location. Well, this rancher had this windmill that was beside a methane (inaudible), and anyhow, because now there's methane water, he doesn't need to use the windmill. So he don't use the windmill. Well, an eagle came in there and put a nest on this windmill. [01:42:00] Well, now, because that eagle's got a nest there on this windmill, even though, all these years, there's been trucks going in and out and around and

everything, that eagle comes back every year and nests in this nest. Well, this oil company wants to drill back in there, and they don't want to build a whole new road. And it's only like, I think, a mile and a half they have to go across this ranch on this methane road to get to their location, but because of that eagle's nest, the BLM made this oil company build seven miles of road around here to get to this location, and there's already a road built right in here.

JUNGE: It sounds to me, and I work for a state program in history that was 50-50 matching funds, federal-state, so I know a little bit about this, but it seems to me like there's a certain amount of reasonability that has to take place, like -- but perhaps those BLM [01:43:00] people were strapped by their own regulations.

AVERY: Well, and here we go again. EPA and ESA. They're the two most powerful departments in our government.

JUNGE: Environmental Protection, and what's the other one? Endangered Species.

AVERY: And anyhow, I'm working on -- I got it -- I'm able to sit at the table with the U.S. Forest Service on the Thunder Basin grazing land in Converse County, Weston County, and Campbell County on prairie dogs. They're wanting to make a big acreage of prairie dogs so they can

bring the black-footed ferrets in. And I'm not going to go into a lot of depth, because it'd take several days for us to cover all of this, but anyhow, [01:44:00] Natural Resource Defense Council sent out an e-mail, and anyhow, about Wyoming is wanting to kill off all the prairie dogs and they don't want the prairie dogs, they're going to poison them and they're going to do all this stuff, you know. And anyhow, the forest range in Douglas had 70,000 e-mail in 45 minutes. Now, that gives you an idea how --

JUNGE: Of their constituency.

AVERY: And it's people from Maine down the east coast, California, that have not a clue what goes on in the state of Wyoming. And I really don't give a damn what goes on in Maine or Florida or California. But I'm really concerned about what goes on in the state of Wyoming, and I -- and I believe in conservation, and I believe in protecting our animals and stuff. [01:45:00] But some of that stuff has gotten so ridiculous and so out of hand that we as a state have no say in any of this anymore. It's people that live in other states that have more say on what's going on in our state than we do.

JUNGE: So you think there's a neo-sagebrush rebellion going on?

AVERY: A what, now?

JUNGE: (laughs) I'm sorry. You remember the Sagebrush Rebellion under Watt, James Watt.

AVERY: Yeah.

JUNGE: All right. They wanted to take all the state land -- or all the federal lands and give them back to the states, and there was a whole -- there was a big furor over this, and there is periodically, but --

AVERY: And it's still going on.

JUNGE: Yeah, and I was just wondering if there was a neo one, a new one.

AVERY: There is. It's called the American Lands Council, and go home, look that up on the internet. It's where Tim Ivery out of Utah has [01:46:00] done some research and found, in the Constitution of the United States, where the -- it's against the law for the federal government to own land.

JUNGE: That changed after the Civil War, though, I think.

AVERY: And it's still in effect. But the federal government has gotten so comfortable with this, they don't want to give it up. And now you got Nevada and Utah that's fighting all of this, and when I was at WCCA meeting this spring in Saratoga, there was a guy there speaking on behalf of the Western Governors' Association. The Western Governors' Association even leaning that direction too.

And so, I'll be honest with you, it's going to take years for it to happen, but I believe that the federal lands are best in the states' hands.

JUNGE: Really?

AVERY: I really do, because [01:47:01] we are -- we are right here. Our governor lives in our state, and who knows more about our lands than, I mean, somebody that lives in Washington, D.C., you know. And I guarantee you, I've been back there twice now, and everything they're looking at is on paper, and they're looking at how many comments for this, and how many comments for that, and we're --

JUNGE: It's a political game.

AVERY: Yeah. And so it's important for us from Wyoming to be back there to tell our story, and although at times I feel like we're beating our head against the wall, but it all goes back to what I told you earlier. You don't get nothing done starting at the bottom and working up; you got to go to the top and work down. And that's why I went back to D.C. over a year ago, was to get at the top and build a rapport with those people [01:48:00] back there, and then -- and then work down. Because who will they listen to? The only ones they've listened to are the environmentalists that are working on you and I's money, and they're back there, they're telling their story and they're crying their

tears, but nobody from here, because we think it's silly to go back there, and we thought that by ignoring them, they'd go away. Well, they haven't. They got power, they got educated, they work in these different government agencies, and until they're -- it's so infiltrated with environmentalists, it's pathetic.

JUNGE: Do you want to be governor some day?

AVERY: I don't know whether I'd be a very good governor.

JUNGE: Why?

AVERY: Well, I don't know. I ain't polished enough, I don't think. But I just -- but I do feel that [01:49:00] I guess in the back of my mind it could be a thought, but I never really thought that much about it.

JUNGE: It's like, let's see where this goes, right? See how far we can take this. Yeah. Well, listen, Matt --

AVERY: So, my question to you is, all of this recording and everything, what do you with it now?

JUNGE: I turn it over to the EPA.

AVERY: (laughs) And the ESA.

JUNGE: ESA. Excuse me.

AVERY: No, you had the first one right. The other's just another part to it.

JUNGE: Wait a minute. Environmental -- yeah, OK. No, this -
- you know, this is not going to be, most of this, three-

fourths of this is not going to be usable by anybody who's doing aviation history unless they got a political interest, so no, I just love talking to people like you about their thinking. You know, I've been in Wyoming for - - I wasn't born here. You were born here, right? I've lived here since '67. What's that? I'm going -- it's going on 50 years. So I'm always learning something new about Wyoming people, and I really [01:50:00] enjoy talking to Wyoming people. And you know, I'm a Democrat. You knew that, didn't you?

EVERY: Are you? Yeah. (laughs)

JUNGE: Sure. Don't tell me you didn't.

EVERY: No, I didn't know you were a Democrat.

JUNGE: Yeah, I'm a Democrat --

EVERY: I really didn't care. (laughs)

JUNGE: I'm a goddamn liberal environmentalist. Anyway, no, I am interested in your opinion. I'm interested in the history of this state, and the more I talk to people like you, the more I find out. And so that's interesting to me. But, are we going to use the stuff on aviation? I hope so. And what this'll -- what'll happen to this tape is, it'll go into the archives and it'll sit there, probably, untranscribed for God knows how long, until somebody says, OK --

AVERY: So 10 years from now there's going to be a Democrat listening to it and (laughs) --

JUNGE: (laughs) That's right. That's right. And say, "Who in the hell was this guy?" No, but, you know, they want to do an online museum [01:51:00] -- did I tell you about that? Well, you'd be able to go onto your computer and you'd be able to type in your name and say, "Who is Matt Avery?" OK, there's a picture of him, and, you know, he was a county commissioner, he talks about an aeronautics class, the first aeronautics class in Wyoming, ever. OK, he was a member; what did he have to say about his teacher? What kind of a class was it? What did he learn? Did I ever ask you what you learned? (laughs)

AVERY: (laughs) Buckle my seatbelt.

JUNGE: Buckle your seatbelt, thank you. So, you know, they're going to want to know, you know, from the people who attended the class, what that class was all about. And I had a dickens of a time trying to find anybody that knew anything about this. The Campbell County School District doesn't know anything about it.

AVERY: Really?

JUNGE: No, except one guy, Don Dihle, I think his name is. D-I-H-L-E. Don Dihle. And he's in the bureaucracy, and I can't remember his position, but a nice guy. I mean, he

looked up [01:52:00] some stuff for me, he gave me some tips, and from there I went out and I finally found people like you. So, OK, now we have a little bit of information on an aeronautics class. Where does that play a role -- excuse me, where does that play a role in the history of Wyoming aviation? I don't know. I don't know. My job is to explore the topic. So it will probably sit in the archives and go untranscribed and unlistened to, unless you tell your kids, say -- how many kids do you have?

AVERY: I got one. She's the boss.

JUNGE: The daughter.

AVERY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Yeah, that's right. You told me about her. So let's say your daughter says, "Well, I understand this guy did an interview with my dad years and years ago. Is that in the archives? Yup, there it is. Well, let's listen to that, and listen to his rant." No, no. They'll say, "Well, this is interesting, and let's go listen to this and let's get a copy of this for our family." So I don't see this being used by a whole lot of people except people that are interested in aviation history and family members.

[01:53:00] I mean, I don't think your constituency is going to say, "Well, let's see what he found out -- what he said about airplanes."

EVERY: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JUNGE: You know, but no, most of this stuff is not relevant at all to air -- aviation history. But I will --

EVERY: Well, you've heard of the Powers Aviation over in Greybull?

JUNGE: Hawkins and Powers. Yeah.

EVERY: My mother was a Powers.

JUNGE: Was she?

EVERY: Her maiden name was Powers.

JUNGE: Was she related to Gene Powers?

EVERY: They are related. I don't know exactly how, but they are related.

JUNGE: I'm going to talk to Gene Powers here in about a week, if he's home.

EVERY: My -- they all was raised up in that --

JUNGE: Greybull area?

EVERY: Well, a big bunch of them came out of that Pass Creek country north of Sheridan, which is just over the mountain from Greybull there.

JUNGE: Right, yeah, I used -- I stacked hay once on Pass Creek, up by Parkman.

EVERY: My great-granddad [01:54:00] on my mom's -- yeah, on my grandma's side, homesteaded on Pass Creek. He was a Civil War veteran, and anyhow, the government gave all the

Civil War veterans for their pay a homestead, and he was going to his homestead and he crossed Pass Creek and fell in love with that area, and he went back and he talked the government into letting him have a homestead on Pass Creek. His original homestead was where the Billings railroad depot is today. And so he traded that homestead for a homestead on Pass Creek.

JUNGE: That's like owning five acres of downtown Dallas.

Man, so that -- right where the railroad station was?

AVERY: Where the depot is, yeah. That's what my mom tells me. Now, and my mom was quite a history buff, you know, so.

JUNGE: This was on her side of the family.

AVERY: Yeah.

JUNGE: Her -- would have been her grandfather.

AVERY: Her grandmother [01:55:00] on her mother's side.

JUNGE: On her mother's side.

AVERY: Her granddad on her mother's side, yeah.

JUNGE: OK. You know where Parkman is? Yeah. Is it anywhere in that vicinity where they finally --

AVERY: You turn, I think it's just north of Parkman there a little ways, and you -- and it takes you right across the railroad tracks, and you go right up Pass Creek to the mountains there.

JUNGE: To the Pryors? Towards the Pryors?

AVERY: No, the Pryors --

JUNGE: Oh, no, the Pryors are on the other side. I'm sorry.

AVERY: Yeah. And, but anyhow, my grandmother's got a sister that's buried up there, died at a young age. And it's kind of weird, had a band, my cousin was my drummer and we were playing up there at Nicholson's ranch up there, and he was a big polo guy, and he was [01:56:00] -- rubbed elbows with, oh --

JUNGE: Malcolm [Wallop?]?

AVERY: Malcolm [Wallop?] and, but anyhow, they had these yard parties, and we played there, and this happened to be our great-granddad's homestead. And we told this guy more about the history of his place than he ever knew, you know.

JUNGE: Is that right?

AVERY: Yeah, and --

JUNGE: Up around Parkman?

AVERY: Yeah, west of Parkman on Pass Creek there.

JUNGE: Interesting. Wait a minute. We didn't even talk about your musical career. When did you -- but that's for another day. What -- you play the guitar. What's the name of your group?

AVERY: I don't -- we had a group for like 10 years; this was back in the seventies, early seventies, and ran up into the

eighties there, called Big Sky. We didn't -- played at country dances and community halls.

JUNGE: What did you play? Old classic country?

AVERY: Old country. Old country, yeah. We played Hank Williams and Johnny Cash and [01:57:01] -- and I (inaudible) --

JUNGE: George Jones, Lefty Frizzell, all those guys?

AVERY: Well, the newest ones was like Charley Pride, you know, that was getting pretty modern. Merle Haggard was getting pretty modern, you know.

JUNGE: Merle Haggard was?

AVERY: And don't forget Waylon and Willie.

JUNGE: Waylon and Willie, that's right. I was just listening to them on the way up here. When did you first play the guitar?

AVERY: I started playing when I was in the fourth grade, and when we moved down from Lodge Grass to Little Powder River, there was a neighbor working for my dad that winter, and when I was at Lodge Grass I played trumpet in the band there, and I really liked the trumpet, but we just leased it and so when we left there I had to give it back, or turn it back, and anyhow, [01:58:00] came home from school one night and my dad and this neighbor was in the kitchen there drinking coffee, and this neighbor, he says, "Want to learn

to play guitar, boy?" And I said, "Yeah, that sounds cool." And anyhow, he said, "Well," he said, "I'll bring one down and get you started." And I think him and dad already had this deal worked out. But anyhow, I get home the next night and here's this little [Dan?] electric guitar with a little bitty amplifier about a foot square, it was a little Gibson amp. And anyhow, he showed me three chords and he drew them out on a piece of paper. And he told me, he said, "You've got one week to learn them chords inside and out without looking at your hands, making chord changes and everything, and having some rhythm." And he said, "If you can't do that," he says, "I'm going to take the guitar away," and he said, "we'll forget this ever happened." And I mean, I hurried up and got [01:59:00] my homework done and I'd sit there and I'd play them chords and I'd play them chords. And he came back in a week and he said, "Well, let's see what you can do." And I mean, I went through them chords and I had -- I had a Scottish dance rhythm to it, you know. And anyhow, "Well, I'll show you three more chords." So he showed me three more chords, and he said, "You got another week." So he came back in a week and I showed him what I could do with those chords plus the first three that he showed me, and I got all done and he said, "Well, I showed you everything I know," and

left. And anyhow, I -- but I didn't know how to make runs in between the chords and stuff. My uncle, my mom's youngest brother, was quite a rhythm player, and that's all I played with, rhythm, but he could make runs. And my cousin, he could make those runs on the guitar too. And so they showed me how to do that [02:00:00] and so I developed over the years on how to make that sound pretty good. And then I played by myself. I'd go up to the Pioneer Manor and play up there, and then I'd play at Primrose, it's another assisted living home there in Gillette, and I'd play there.

JUNGE: You still play?

AVERY: Oh, yeah. I got to play tomorrow down at Wright. They're having this 3-D shoot down there, and they want some music, and so I'm going to --

JUNGE: Three-D shoot?

AVERY: Yeah, it's an archery shoot. They have these three-dimensional critters set up in different places, and these guys go through this course and they -- they shoot these three-dimensional animals, you know.

JUNGE: So you -- do you sing too?

AVERY: Mm-hmm. That's all I do. I sing and play rhythm.

JUNGE: Not lead guitar, rhythm --

AVERY: I'm not a lead. I got too many thumbs on one hand, so it's hard.

JUNGE: God, I -- I'd love to hear [02:01:00] your -- well, let's see, you're doing it by yourself?

AVERY: Yeah. There's going to be another guy, and he might join in with me in the afternoon. His name is Lou Vasquez, and he lives down by Wright, and he's got a recording studio down there. And I went down there several years ago and I had him record 14 songs for me, and I want to do two more CDs --

JUNGE: Oh, you did a CD already.

AVERY: Mm-hmm. And then I want to do another one, two more, another one of some other old songs that I do pretty well, and then -- and then I want to throw in some that I've written. I've written about two or three songs --

JUNGE: Good for you. Do you have a copy of this DVD?

AVERY: At home I do, yeah. I don't have one in my pickup.

JUNGE: God, I'd love to hear -- oh, I'd love to hear it. I really would. I'd love to hear your style.

AVERY: Yeah, I'll be -- I won't be too far from you tomorrow, just east [02:02:00] of you. You're going to be on [Clark Ellen?], I'll be over there off of 59.

JUNGE: How far away is that?

AVERY: I'll be just north of Wright there, about four, five miles. Called the Buffalo ranch.

JUNGE: All right. Draw out a little map, because I might just pop over. Are you going to be there all day?

AVERY: Yeah. From 8 to 4. So here's north, and here's Gillette here --

JUNGE: Put a little G by there so I know what that --

AVERY: OK. I got the shakes here. There's a G. And take basically -- and here's Wright.

JUNGE: Wait a minute. This has got to be north up here, then.

AVERY: Yeah, you're right. I'm sorry, I'm looking at this backwards here.

JUNGE: Yeah, just do it the way you'd do it. Put this --

AVERY: OK. Here's south.

JUNGE: Right. Now I understand.

AVERY: And this is north. OK. Anyhow, you come like this, the highway from Gillette [02:03:00] to Wright, and here's 50 coming out this way, and then it kind of angles over here to -- and there's the highway of 387. And the [Clark Ellen?] road comes right down through here like this. And Savageton is over in here, and you're going to come across over here somewhere.

JUNGE: So this road is what, now?

AVERY: This is -- I'll write this on here.

JUNGE: Oh, here, let me turn this off.

END OF AUDIO FILE