

Roxanne Beyer, by Julie M. Luker

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Minnesota

JL: Julie Luker

RB: Roxanne Beyer

JL: This is an interview conducted as part of a larger faculty and student research project initiated by Dr. Julie Luker of Concordia University, Saint Paul. Today is Thursday, August 3rd, 2023. I am here with Roxanne Beyer. My name is Julie Luker, and I am an assistant professor of psychology at Concordia University, Saint Paul. Today, I'll be talking to Roxanne about what life was like growing up in the Twin Cities. During this interview, I'm going to ask you to reflect on your childhood life experiences as they relate to a variety of social topics from that time period. For the purposes of this interview, we've defined childhood as birth through 17 years of age. To begin, please restate and spell your full name, including a maiden name applicable.

RB: My full name is Roxanne Marie. Mulner is my maiden name, M-U-L-N-E-R. Beyer, B-E-Y-E-R.

JL: Thank you. Please identify your race and gender.

RB: Female and Caucasian.

JL: Please state your date of birth.

RB: November 16th, 1953.

JL: Finally, please share where you grew up, such as the name of the neighborhood or a nearby street intersection, and include any major moves you may have made during that time period.

RB: I grew up in Saint Paul. The neighborhood was referred to as Rice Street, the North End. We lived on Marion Street, and the first busy cross street was Arlington Avenue. Where Arlington and Rice Street intersected in the north, we were on the west end of that. My house is no longer there. I never moved, by the way. I lived there my whole life until I moved out. But they started a project to put in Arlington High School, and they moved our house, everything on both streets, my grandfather's house on Arlington, to clear that whole area. I don't even know the size of the area, but it was like two, three, maybe even four city blocks to house a high school, which now I think is a magnet school, but I don't know the name of it.

JL: Did they move or demolish your house?

RB: They moved it. I don't know what they did with my grandfather's house. But our house is over on a side street, off of Larpenteur Avenue, on the south side of Larpenteur Avenue. I drove by a couple of times to look at it. And, you know, it's just not the same. It is just like a horse of a different color. You go there, you look at that house, you go "Oh, yeah, that kind of looks like it." But... Your memories are your memories. That's all you got.

JL: You're right there. Thank you. I'd like to learn more about your family life. Let's begin with the memories that you have for immediate and extended family. Please share some memories that you have about these relationships.

RB: Well, my immediate family, I had three older brothers, and I was the youngest girl. And of course, everybody thought I was spoiled because I was the only girl, and I was the youngest. But that was not really the case in my opinion, because back then, you were the person that helped your mom. You did everything for your brothers and your dad, the cooking, the cleaning, all of the grocery shopping, all of that sort of thing. But the interesting concept with our family is like there were almost two families. My parents were together from the time they married until they both died. However, there was a big gap between the brother closest in age to me, and then the two older brothers. There was like a nine-year gap. She had lost a baby, and I didn't find out until later in life that this was something that was pretty common. My cousin, in researching our family tree, etc., said it seemed really common. That they lost a baby in the family. And of course, a traumatic experience. I can't even imagine what it was like for her. But my brother closest to age to me was three and a half years older than me. When he was born, I think she just latched on to him and probably never let him out of her sight for that fear of losing another child, I think I'm not 100% sure. But my two older brothers, they always gave us, teased us, gave us crap, if you will, about. Well, I never had to do that when I was a kid. Because we were both raised differently. You know, they were they were raised while my oldest brother was born in 1938, and the other one in 1940 and we were 1950 and 1953. So pretty big gap between there. But the thing about our families, though, and I guess I would also classify this maybe as a value, is that the family was important. That was the number one thing. Every family came first for everything. And we always did things with our aunts and uncles and cousins because we all lived fairly close. I don't know if you're familiar with... I went to St Bernard's House grade school and high school, and that was, if I had to guess maybe a mile away from our house. So, everybody that grew up in that whole area went to the school there. Of course, our cousins went to the same school, we all kind of hung together as a family.

JL: All the people you're describing. Did you feel closer to some than others? You mentioned your older brothers, perhaps a different generation, technically, but did you feel close to your brother that was closer to you or maybe some of your cousins?

RB: I was definitely closer to my brother, who was born in 1950. We played together when we weren't out and about with our own friends, we played together. We did things together. Of course, with siblings there's also that feeling of I'm a burden. You know, at the other. Given our family was the older ones always should look out for the younger ones. So, because I was the youngest, my brothers always had to either drag me along or they were babysitting me. Or it was watch out for Roxanne. She's the youngest kind of thing. So, in a way, I think I kind of felt like I was a burden to them. You know? But still, yeah, I was closest with the youngest of the of the boys. And there were a few cousins that I was close with, but I was the youngest of... My mother had eight siblings. My dad had like five, but I was the youngest pretty much of the whole crew. So, there wasn't anybody else really that I connected with. I was just always the youngest one in the group it seemed.

JL: Did you guys have any family pets?

RB: Yes, we did. We grew up in dogs. I grew up with a German shepherd. The kids in the neighborhood that I hung around with had dogs, too. When we would walk to the store to get groceries or comic books or candy or whatever. Wherever we rode our bikes, the dogs came with us. And they would sit outside the glass door of the store and just watch and look and see where you were. There wasn't a single person who would even approach us kids, especially in particular because I had the German Shepherd with all the time. So yeah, we had pets. We never had a cat, but we had we had birds. Mom liked parakeets and canaries. But yeah, we were an animal family. Definitely. She raised chickens, but I was not born yet. And then she used the coop to raise racing pigeons. And that was a hobby of hers, too, so.

JL: Wow. Alright, thank you. Next, please describe the ways in which your family's economic status influenced your childhood.

RB: You know, I read that question and I thought, oh my gosh what was my economic status? You know, growing up. You don't really pay any attention to that sort of thing when you're a kid and everybody in your neighborhood that lives around you, they live in the same kind of house. They all have the same kind of income. So, it never really struck me to look at whether or not I was well off. I was poor. None of that. And then another side gig that my parents had, they had a newspaper route part time for income. It was a motor route. They did Roseville, New Brighton, Arden Hills. They had over 600 customers. It took like two or 3 hours to deliver newspapers. Back then, I think that was my first introduction to, wow, look at the houses out here. They are really well off and a lot of them were doctors, dentists and lawyers. And that was, I think, my first experience or familiarization that there is a difference in incomes and the kinds of houses that people live in.

JL: What did you say, or perhaps you didn't yet... What do your parents do for a living? Besides the paper out, which it sounded like that was on the side.

RB: My dad worked for the Great Northern Pacific Railroad. I believe that was his whole career. He and two of his brothers worked there as well. And mom was a stay-at-home mom with the exception of, you know, she helped deliver the newspapers. She would do the paper route with-this is funny-my second oldest brother's girlfriend, who we ended up marrying. She drove, Mom sat in the passenger seat and rolling up papers and sticking them in the tube. And they were gone for like two and a half hours a day. So, when I came home from school, I was charged with preparing supper, getting everything ready. Because it took so long to do that whole paper route thing. And all of us, you know, took our turns. I had to learn how to drive in the middle of the seat and deliver newspapers. I was out there with my dad driving and learning how to do it with my permit. But those were the two main sources of income, I guess you could say.

JL: Okay. And that paper route was that daily?

RB: Every day. Morning and evening paper: Pioneer Press.

JL: That's a lot of work.

RB: Yeah. Dad. Dad used to get up at 3:30 in the morning, and he did the morning paper route by himself and then went to his job at the railroad. And then, of course, as two older brothers were able to drive and get their license. Then they started doing the morning route. So, we just split it up between family to get it done. And yeah, every single day. Well, you know, there was morning, evening, Saturday and Sunday paper. Of course, everybody wanted the Sunday paper.

JL: Yeah, that would be hard to roll because it's so thick.

RB: It was. When I was younger, I was helping you use two hands to get that thing in the paper tube. Because when you didn't and it fell and it was windy, everybody got a little bit of the paper. And the funny thing that I remember about the paper route is the newspaper smell. And as kids, we'd always want to bring, oh, can I bring my girlfriend Mom? Without fail, they'd be, you know, it's the stopping and starting and you'd go to the next mailbox and stop, and you'd start and stop. But it'd be like a half hour, and they'd be out the window puking because of the smell of the newspapers and the stopping and starting. And finally, Mom just got to a point where she said, don't ask me, don't even ask me to bring somebody with, because you know what's going to happen? They're going to get sick, and they did. It was just the funniest thing. But of course, I grew up with that. So, it wasn't. I would imagine it's similar to somebody who raises cows or pigs, and they don't pay attention to the smell at all. But yet for you, it's repulsive.

RB: Yes.

RB: I don't know. That memory just came through for some odd reason. [Laughter]

JL: But it was really fun to hear about that. Thank you. Yeah. Now I'd like to know about your experiences with religions such as Catholicism, Lutheranism, etc... Describe what you can recall about your family's religious practices when you were growing up.

RB: Wow. Well, St Bernard's was a Catholic grade school and high school. And as everyone pretty much knows from other people that have the experience that I had a pretty shame-based childhood based on Catholicism. So, my mom we weren't really religious. You know, we weren't the. Yet in grade school, we had to go to all school Mass, all grade school grades and classrooms every day. That was how you started your day. And then on Fridays, the high school came in on Fridays and joined us. Mom always wanted me to go to church with her, but I never really wanted to. I don't think I got out of it until I was probably sophomore, junior, senior in high school. Dad never went. He was not a believer. In fact, I wish now that I would have talked to him about his religious beliefs. Because he wanted nothing to do with it. And Mom always used to say, you know, if you ever go to church, the statues are going to fall over because it's going to be such a shock that you're even in the building. So, he never went, and mom went all the time.

JL: Was that a point of contention between your parents or did they overlook that?

RB: I think they overlooked it because I think she knew there was no way she was going to get him to go. And the thing is, I don't think it mattered to her. There are more important things in life than that. You know, I think she kind of felt like, you know. I'm going to do what I want to do, and you do what you want to do. Kind of like voting. It's the same thing, you know? You vote for who you want to, and I'll vote for who I want to. And if you want, sure, that's fine, but. So, I grew up. Actually, I'd have to say now I never really practiced from maybe middle of high school on in my life. Now, I'd have to say I'm probably more of an agnostic than anything else. It just didn't make sense to me. All of the ballyhoo that they put you through and, you know, the demeaning part of it. I remember we all sung along with Mass. Growing up, we had to go to confession. And it was also an all-school thing. And you'd get in there. And you'd wait and wait and wait your turn. And you go into the confessional and even if you said, bless me, Father, I have not sinned. It was unheard of. And then they would say, of course. You had to have done something wrong. So, you would be standing in line waiting, at least I did, to get into the confessional. And you'd start thinking of things to make up. You know, I lied to my parents. I stole some of their temple wine and I drank it. Or just anything just so that you could get past that moment, you know? But yeah.

JL: It sounds forced in that way.

RB: Well, I think. Yeah, the whole bailiwick was forced. I think a lot of people turned away from it because of that. There was just no logic to a lot of it, for a lot of people. But mom used to go and then eventually she just stopped going too. But, you know, the things that I think she wanted to do with her family, like her sisters, all went. And my one aunt, she had a lot of friends that were nuns in the convent. And she'd go over to visit them. She'd bring me with sometimes, too, which was wonderful, because I got way more attention from those nuns than my parents or anybody. And I think it was because she used to play the organ. She was like a backup person for that. So, I think my mom's family was way more religious than my dad's family, and I kind of fell somewhere in between the middle there until I got old enough.

JL: Now I'd like to learn more about the neighborhood in which you grew up. Describe what comes to mind when thinking about that neighborhood.

RB: Well, the thing that really came to mind for me first when I started to think about it was the trust that you had in your neighbors. Now, granted, in my neighborhood, my grandfather, a lot of my aunts and uncles lived like within a block or two on my dad's side of the family. And I don't know if that was part of it or if it was just everybody in the neighborhood that felt like they could trust people. We never locked our doors, never locked our cars. You know, the value of trust that was there was absolutely amazing. Anybody could have walked into the house. And nowadays, I would never do that. I would make sure my car is locked, especially in the city. And, you know, a few times I've even gone back to the neighborhood and driven around there and where the school is and thought, well, I for sure would be a lock on my car now. There's just no doubt about it. But we also lived very close to a police garage slash station. They did a lot of mechanical work on all of the police cars down there. It was like two blocks away from our house. But when I was growing up there, you could look out her kitchen window across Rice Street and see all the way across Rice Street, which was like two or three blocks away. And there was a big pasture and Schroeder's milk cows, you could see them in the pasture. Of course, now... I don't know if you're familiar with Schroeder milk products, but they then moved further out on Rice Street. I think there are other buildings still there. I don't know for sure. So, it was pretty open out there. We were considered country. You know, because about a half a block down the road to the north, there was no pavement. It was a dirt road, and everything was open. And as kids used to play in the fields back there, there were these tall weeds that grew. I don't know what they were called, but they were way over our heads. And so, we would make all these paths and places to go and places where we could sit and play. And then sometimes, if we could stay out after dark, we'd go to one of the spots and we'd make a bonfire and we'd sit there and tell spooky stories and stuff. And it was just amazing, really. It was like we had our own little jungle. And then, of course, they started moving houses in. That ended that. But it was really a neighborhood that you felt safe in. You know, we'd go trick or treating and down dark streets and never had a fear of anything. None of us kids did. Of course, we did bring the dogs, most of the time. They'd follow along. We were on Arlington Street back at that time, that was the last bus line. That was the last place that was the farthest north you could catch a bus was on Arlington Street. And it had come down Arlington from way out by close to Takoma Park. And it would go down to Rice Street, and it would make a right and would go downtown. And that was our way to go shopping, because of course, back then you didn't have any shopping malls. Everybody went downtown to the Golden Rule and the Emporium. And that's where you did all your shopping and that's where you went and saw movies.

JL: So, being out in that area, having it being considered "country" at the time, was it really quiet?

RB: Very quiet. Very, very quiet and so many things that I saw as a kid growing up that you just don't see anymore. You know, my back window from my bedroom. You could see these fields with these tall grasses and things. And you could go out there and just fan your hands on these grasses and all the lightning bugs that fly up and it sparkled almost like stars. There were so many of them.

I still think of that to this day. And here I'm out in Lino Lakes. Considered country, maybe, but, you know, it's pretty far north from the city. I'll bet you any given night, I'll see one. Maybe one firefly. It's really sad. But yeah, growing up, it was quiet. I don't remember hearing. Any of the number of sirens that you're hearing. In fact, after we moved out here, I got a job working at the Minnesota Department of Health and we were in the Golden Rule building and I remember sitting in there at one point in time thinking, "Oh my God, I can't believe all the sirens that are out here!" Because you were right in downtown Saint Paul and there were sirens constantly, nonstop, and noise.

JL: Before we move on to the next section. Because I'm interested in the fact it felt so country at the time. How spaced out were the homes in your neighborhood and did that contribute to the country feeling at all, or did it were they closer together and did it feel tighter?

RB: I think they were about the same distance. I mean, it definitely was not like where I live now. Most of the homes around me have two and a half, three acres or more. We had a regular sized lot. But the point was there were when you turned the corner it was my grandfather. He had the corner and a whole bunch of stuff. And then our house. And then my uncle's house. And then there was nothing. And then there was the dirt road, and then that went all the way down to Wheelock Parkway. And there were maybe one or two houses down in that area. Across the street there was nothing. Like I said, I could see the cows. Schroeder's milk pot was on the hill through my kitchen window. And then eventually, when they were tearing down the upper levee and moving out all the Italian folk from there to put those marvelous gas tanks in. They built three brand new houses across the street from us. And two Italian families moved in there. And then the other one, another uncle and aunt of mine. Otherwise. Yeah, there was, like, hardly anything. We were on the edge of the world.

JL: Thank you so much for describing all of that. Very interesting. I liked hearing about it. Next. And you have touched on this a little bit already. I'd like to learn about the values shared by family and neighbors. And just to clarify, values are principles or standards that help guide behavior. And you did discuss this a little bit. Can you more specifically describe some memories that come to mind that could also demonstrate in addition, what these values were for not just your family, but the people you live with nearby?

RB: Yeah. So, I think, you know, one of the things that came to mind for me with that was there was some sort of expectation everyone had of their neighbors. You were a decent person. You know, you kept your house maintained and your yard maintained. And the ones that didn't. Parents told their kids. Don't go over there. Stay away from them, cause, you know, they're shady characters. And a lot of the time, too, you know, we'd get together and we'd either egg house or toilet paper the house or something, you know. But there definitely was a level of, I don't know if you want to call it a status that everybody expected people to have. And if you didn't, you were kind of ostracized by the rest of the group. So, there was that. But I think some of the families there... Of course, you have domestic abuse families. You know, people who you know. The dad maybe is an alcoholic. And you knew the ramifications of that, and you wanted to stay away from that. In fact, you were told to stay away from that pretty much. And even though you felt sorry for the kids who lived in those environments. You also were very standoffish towards them. You know, it wasn't a situation then where anybody would say, oh, let's try and take this person aside and be friends with them. And instead, it was almost like you are afraid of us now to a certain degree. And there was almost like, you know, some of something is going to rub off on you because of it. And, of course, you know, there's always the secrets of something about your family that mom and dad would say. Don't say anything to anybody about this, you know? For us, my grandfather.... My grandparents on both sides came from the old country. And here's the thing. You call it the old country, because we thought it was Austria. But then when my cousins started researching our family history, we found out that it wasn't Austria. It didn't become Austria until, like 1936. Well, after Grandpa and

Grandma came over to America. We tried to research and couldn't find out any information. But yeah, my grandfather and my dad's dad, he was an illegitimate child. And that was something that, you know, you don't talk about that type of thing or if you had an aunt that got pregnant and she had to get married, you didn't talk about that back then either. Because it was like this unspoken message that was there that you were a bad person, you did something wrong. Of course, the other thing about my grandfather that happened way before I was born, but he was a moonshiner, and he spent a bit of time in Leavenworth Penitentiary. Guess he got caught and he had a still that went underneath the alley on the side of the house where he made all his moonshine. Yeah, he went to prison and Grandma was on probation while she was at home with six kids trying to take care of things and run the house. And actually, I don't know, I haven't looked at those documents for a long time. He was eventually pardoned by President. Roosevelt when I got the documents for that, too. But, you know, that isn't anything. You go to school and say, hey guys, guess what? My grandfather knows how to make [whiskey], and my Dad and my brothers know how to make whiskey, too. Of course, you don't know, they'd probably want some, you know. But it was like drinking lighter fluid. I don't personally see what anybody saw in it. But so, those kinds of things were things that you just you didn't talk about them with anybody. You knew about them, but you didn't talk about them.

JL: When the residents from the upper levee moved into your neighborhood, were there any cultural issues that occurred?

RB: Not with us or anybody in the neighborhood that I but, you know, they kind of had their own thing going on over there. I think a lot of the people in the neighborhood were wondering if they had anything to do with the Mafia or, you know. But no. Our family, I started to play with the boy that lived across the street. We played games and stuff together. And he was a nice kid. He was a couple of years older than me. And wow, we got some fantastic recipes from the women, the ladies. They showed my mom how to cook Italian food, spaghetti and sauce. It was amazing. But no, I never really noticed or remember, I guess I should say. But, you know, they kind of kept to themselves too. As time went on, I think that was something that I noticed about the neighborhood. And I don't know. It was me growing up. And that I wasn't out and about in the neighborhood. And didn't know everybody. You know, I don't know exactly what it was, but it was like there wasn't as much sharing. And you didn't know as much about people as you got older. I think that happens. I don't know for sure, but. It's just that I noticed it.

JL: Now, here's another topic that you touched on a little bit ago, and I'd love for you to go into more detail. It's about leisure time and if you can describe some additional ways in which you or your family and your neighbors engaged in leisure time when you're growing up. For example, you mentioned the bonfire.

RB: Oh, yeah.

JL: How often and how many people came? What was that like?

RB: Quite a few kids in the neighborhood would come. And it was all one on the on the down low. It was a hush hush thing, and it was just the kids. And you didn't tell. You know, we're going to I'm going to go over, you know, Susie's Tolleson, we're going to play dolls or something. Yet, you went over there and then, of course, you know, as some of the kids that came were, you know, teenagers too, older. Then they started introducing bringing alcohol and all of that. But yeah, we used to do that. We used to raid apple trees in the neighborhood and vegetable gardens. Linder's greenhouse used to be down there, and there was another house that had a big, huge garden. And what was really funny is there was a lot of wild stuff that grew. Then us kids would go and pick. We had asparagus growing in tall grass just down the street where the dirt road. The dirt road began. And if

Mom needed a vegetable, she'd cycle down the road and pick some asparagus for me. And rhubarb. Rhubarb used to grow wild in those fields. So, we'd go, and we'd come home with our arms just full of rhubarb. And mom would make pies and jam and stuff. We were always doing something. Mom was a wonderful cook. She was always cooking. She was, well, there were six sisters. I think up to nine kids. And they did all the food for any time there was a baby shower, a wedding shower of my cousins. She would do all the cooking for all of that. She and her sisters would get together, and they said, okay, well, I'll make potato salad and okay, I'll make the cakes and figure out what they were going to do there. So, she was a really, really good cook. And of course, meeting those Italians really helped to.

JL: Now, given the proximity of your neighborhood, were you close to McCarron's Lake? And if so, did you ever go there?

RB: Yes, we did.

JL: How far away was that for you?

RB: It was only about a mile, I think. You know, we'd ride our bikes over there. And there was nothing around. Of course, because it was. And then gradually houses started springing up here and there. And then there was a Dairy Queen that they put in right across the street from them, from the beach. Of course, you'd have to stop and get ice cream. But yeah, we used to go to McCarran Lake. And, you know, we also like to play games, board games. I remember Paint, Monopoly and all that kind of stuff with my brother. It's really funny too. When we were little, we used to hang clothes outside. All the time because close dryers were, you know, a thing of the future, believe it or not. But she didn't have one. She hung her clothes outside all the time, even in the wintertime, and we'd take shifts in so many clothespins. So, we'd take clothespins, and we would line them up like they were roads, and we'd have roads and we built little checkbook boxes would be a building that would be a grocery store, and we'd play cards in the living room. We'd have the whole living room full of these little roads going all over with all the clothespins and all. And of course, she wasn't able to do any laundry at that point in time. But that that's okay. Oh, I don't know why I thought of that, but that was one of the things we did. We played a lot of board games. We did puzzles. You know, my mom liked to help with puzzles. And we spent a lot of time outside, too. You're always doing stuff. You know, Dad was into hunting and fishing. And they'd go and they'd get fish and we'd be outside cleaning fish, throwing them on the grill. And my one brother, he would trap rabbit. Had traps in the back yard. And pretty gross. It's already trapped, and he'd shoot it with a bow and arrow to kill it. And it'd be like wow, why don't you just let it go? But he'd skin them. And then we'd cook them on the grill with garlic butter and just a little salt pepper. It was delicious. Just delicious. So, we did a lot of that kind of activity too.

JL: All right. Next, let's discuss your experience with schooling. Please describe what it was like going to school as a child.

RB: Horrible. No, I'm serious. It was horrible. [Laughter]

JL: Why was that?

RB: It was degrading. Like I said, I had a very shame-based childhood. You know? You were not ever really complimented. And there would be a few select people who did well, and the rest were just slugs, I think. I don't know. The nuns were mean. Some of them were really nice, too. And of course, my aunt, you know, when I was like second or third grade, when I was little, she would take me over to the convent. So, I knew some of my teachers. I'd see them over there, so they knew me. I would say I was probably like an average student. I got Cs and Ds. I never really... And the

wonderful thing about it is, you know, my parents were not the, you know, I never got punished for having poor grades. It was always, well, do your best, you know. But there is always that competition going on in school. You know, there is always somebody who is doing better than you are. And of course, naturally you feel jealous because they are, are you're not. [Laughter] But I had fun with the kids that I liked. You know. I would go over to their house. I was in a different neighborhood. So, you know, something new. But for the most part, yeah, it was like I said, it was pretty shame-based stuff that they had going on at school.

JL: Did you go to the same-- I shouldn't say the same school, because I know you went from elementary, middle, high school or some combination—but was it the same group of students, though, your whole career?

RB: Yes. Okay. In fact. The group of girls. I still get together with them. We went to grade school and high school together. And we call ourselves the Bernie Girls. And we now get together. Monthly because a lot of us are getting older and some are having health issues and things, and we're like... Well, it used to be once every six months maybe, and then pretty soon it's like, oh, let's get together. And now it's every month. In fact, I'm going to see Barbie with them next week. [Laughter] Yeah, the Barbie movie. We're all going to wear pink. So yeah, I went to yeah, there's a couple that went to different. But most of us are all grade school and high school that we spent together.

JL: You were a private school the whole time, correct?

RB: Correct. We were.

JL: Okay. Well, for our final topic, I'm going to ask you to reflect on local and global issues such as war, poverty, discrimination, social unrest. In your opinion, what were some of the biggest local or global issues affecting the people in your neighborhood when you were growing up?

RB: Local. I don't know so much about local. But I know we were just talking about this the last time we all got together too. The fallout shelters at school. And we used to have to practice. And then, of course, along with that, they encouraged people to have a fallout shelter in their homes. And some did, some didn't. We never really had anything. We had shelving down in the basement, and we stored canned goods down there. But I think it was just because our kitchen was so little. Mom didn't have any room upstairs for it. And it was so annoying to have to run downstairs and get a can of vegetables for supper. So that. I don't know. Oh, and of course, I remember the sonic booms. Hearing those as a kid. You know. When the planes hit Mach one and you'd hear that loud boom. Hear it all the time because there were planes taking off from out by the airport, they had their Air Force military and whatnot. Yeah. I remember when they started doing that. Gosh. And I don't even remember what I think it was in the sixties, the early sixties, late fifties, early sixties. And I remember the first time it happened saying to my mom, what the heck was that? That's the sonic boom. That's nothing. Don't worry about it. Like, it was an everyday thing, but it was totally frightening because it was so loud. I don't, for the life of me understand why you don't hear now, but because once you hit that speed, it would crack. But other global things for me, and I think with all of us, the JFK assassination. You know. I was ten years old when that happened. I vividly remember the teacher wheeling in the cart with the small little black and white TV, and we sat and watched the news almost the whole day at school. Some kids were upset and crying and others were just. You know, not with it. Didn't really care. That was a big local thing for all of us. I think. I don't really know about things locally, outside of things. Affecting us. Like the Winter carnival, you know. And what the heck were those guys called? Oh, my God. So, one of the girls, I'm still friends with her today. I used to deliver newspapers after school. Okay. And her mom ran Tin Cups Kitchen. So, she used to clean chickens for. They were known for their chicken, fabulous chicken.

And they were well known for that. So, we used to go down in the basement at Tin Cups, and we do chickens. I'd help her do her chickens. And then she'd come over and she'd help me do my newspaper route and we'd go back to my house and ma make us some real fabulous, good meal. So, we're down there, and this is during the Winter Carnival, and all of a sudden we hear this loud noise, much like a sonic boom. And scared the heck out of a person. Of course, we're in the basement. The first thing we thought of was it's a gun and the place is getting robbed. Oh, my God, what are we going to do? And we were like, down the stairs and all the way through the basement. Around, like, over in a corner. No doors, no windows. No way out. We're over there cleaning chickens. So, I look at her, she looks at me, she says, you know. I better go see what that is. All of a sudden, I hear her run down the stairs and she's got a piece of chicken wings flapping in the air like this. And she's yelling, hide, hurry up, hide. So, both of us run into the cooler. Get behind these boxes. And then, of course, it's so stupid, because then both of us have our heads sticking out to the side to see what's going on. It's like, oh, real good hiding techniques the two of us have. And sure enough, it was these. G.D. Vulcans. Let me tell you what dirty old men they were. Oh, my God. They were horrific. They came in and they started kissing us, doing nasty sexual harassing things and they laughed in our faces and the clothes were all black from all of that black stuff they had on their faces and whatnot. But that was just a scare and a half. Anyway, the Winter Carnival for me, ever since then, I was like, no, thanks, I'm not even going to go watch the parade because they're going to pull up and get off this stupid truck and attack all of us. So never mind. But that was the only local thing I can think of. What other kind of stuff locally?

JL: Well, earlier you mentioned you mentioned fallout shelters at the school. What that was like, what that looked like.

RB: It was just that symbol, that yellow and black symbol that was on the side of the building. And that's how that building identified that if something happened when there was an air raid, you could come there for storage. You could go there for storage. To me, I don't really recall anything special or different about it except doing the same darn thing you would do if there was a tornado. You go down to the basement. You know, they didn't have there wasn't like a chute that you went in, stairs that you'd walk down to go to another level or anything like that. So, I don't know.

JL: Did they practice drills?

RB: They practice drills at school. Yeah. Okay. I remember doing that probably up until, I don't think eighth grade, maybe high school. I don't remember. Of course, a lot of the buildings still have stickers on them for that. Yeah, to me it was like, wow, this is really annoying. Like I said, it seemed like we're not doing anything different than we wouldn't do if it was a tornado. Just go down to the basement and everybody sits in a corner and then they'll go back up to the classroom. It was like, okay, this is stupid. But I do remember doing it, you know, frequently. But the only other global things that were really cool too, is we had these three groups. We call them greasers, baldies and surfers, and you were identified based on your apparel. And now the greasers. They are much like, I would compare them to today's goth style. And baldies, they were maroon, and I think yellow. And the surfers, they were dressed like the Beach Boys. And anything else about it, I can't even really remember. Just the fact that it was based, like I said, it was based on apparel and that was it.

JL: Did it include boys and girls or just boys?

RB: No, it was boys and girls.

JL: So, it was sort of like different crowds in a high school.

RB: Yeah, I think I remember it more like in seventh or eighth grade than high school. I think it was just a phase. That everybody was going through, and I don't know, they must have thought, oh, this is cool, let's just do this. I don't even know where it originated from to be honest. In fact, when we go to see the Barbie movie next week, I'm going to have to ask the girls if they remember that and what the purpose of it was. Because clearly, I don't.

JL: So, if you didn't belong in either of those groups, were there other groups too, or were you just like the other group of students? And these were the three major other categories.

RB: I don't know. I think it was either you were just the run of the mill, or you were in these other three groups. And based on the way you dressed; you could look at a person. You could say, oh he's a greaser.

JL: Well, this is the end of our interview. Your responses are invaluable, and we really appreciate the time that you took to do this today. So, thank you so much.

RB: It's really fun.