

Erin Bowers: – kind of thing to say.

Pat Jacobson: My name is Pat Jacobson, and I am interviewing.

EB: Erin Bowers. My date of birth is February 23rd, 1969.

PJ: I wonder if you could tell me about your people and how you were raised up.

EB: Currently, my dad is still living, and my mom is still living. They're both still married. My dad is 73. My mom, she'll be 68 here in August. So, they both were working-class families. Both just worked hard. Neither one of them really had college degrees, but both had high school diplomas and worked all their lives. We grew up fairly lower middle class, and hard work was expected. They wanted us to work hard and do the best we could to do things. We were raised in a Catholic household. So, that was an important thing. We had a lot of family get-togethers, growing up, where they would just get together and play cards or whatever, different things. They played a lot of music, guitars and stuff. So, that was interesting too. Our extended family was important too. Cousins and grandparents and aunts and uncles and all that too.

PJ: Tell me a little bit about your grandparents.

EB: My grandmother just passed away within about the last year and a half. She was around ninety-four, ninety-five, and she passed away. She still lived on her own. She was a very good lady, good-hearted to everybody. She didn't know a stranger. She would talk to anybody, rich, poor, tall, short, fat, skinny, whatever. She liked everybody. If there was ever a concern, she'd be like, "I'll pray for you." The last year and a half of her life, she fell and had a crack in her neck. So, she had to wear a neck brace. So, the last year and a half of her life was pretty rough on her. But up till then, she would still get out and play badminton. She lived independently in her own apartment and different stuff. My other grandmother passed away. She was pushing eighties or so. Passed away when I was younger. Then my grandfather passed away. I was probably about nineteen, so probably pushing twenty-five, thirty years ago, whatever, thirtyish. I'm trying to think. [laughter] Then, let's see, my other grandfather passed away when I was young. I was eleven or twelve. There wasn't a whole lot of getting together with him because it was a long story there too. [laughter]

PJ: Do you want to...

EB: Myself, I just live here independently. I have my own house, and I have two little dogs. That's it for me. I get together with family. We had lunch with family, all yesterday. Looking for a nice guy, though, still. [laughter]

PJ: Could you tell me, what have you done since high school?

EB: Well, I actually went in the Army Reserves when I was 17. I paid for my college through the Army Reserves. I went to basic training between my junior and senior year. Then I went and did the reserves. Then after I graduated, I went on and did what they call AIT, Advanced Individual Training. I had two MOSs military specialties. One was truck driving, drove 18-

wheelers, and I did a lot of clerical computer work and stuff like that. I went to Honduras through the Army Reserves. Then I got activated for Desert Storm, spent six and a half months in Saudi Arabia, got to see Bahrain and some stuff over in Saudi Arabia. I came back from there. Then I finished my college. Because actually, I was just getting ready to do my student teaching before I got activated to go into Desert Storm. So, then I finished that. Then I went on to go to work. I worked with juvenile delinquents in a social services-type setting, for about a year, year-and-a-half. Got an apartment. Then I ended up switching to work — I taught preschool for five years. While I was teaching preschool, I went on to get my Master's degree in Special Ed while I was there. Then as I was working there, I heard about an opening with working with teen parents at the high school, Wheeling Park High School. So, I got in on that. It was a half day job. So, I started out with that, doing that half day, working with teen parents. In the afternoons, I would do homebounds with kids that had sickness or different things. Then for a while, I did — I've always worked with the teen parents for the past seventeen years, but I've had different afternoon, the other half of the day thing. So, part of the time I worked at Northern Community College through Ohio County Schools, teaching adult basic ed. Then most recently, I've been working with alternative ed kids who are still in the regular school setting, but they don't do well in the regular school setting. So, they kind of separate them into alternative ed situation. I've been highly involved with stuff, environmental concerns with trying to get renewable energy going and shed light on some fracking issues and different things like that. I'm also very big into law of attraction. I'm really into that. I'd like to learn more about that more and more. I'm actually going this summer to London to meet up with some people that I'm involved in, a Manifesting Excellence group. I'm into spiritual stuff. Meditation. I go to meditation groups, and I go to spiritual things, mediums and spiritual things like that.

PJ: I would like to hear more about some of these things. I would love to hear a little bit more about going to London and this...

EB: Well, I've been in this group called Manifesting Excellence, for the last year and a half. The guy who heads it up is an author. Actually, he has a book out. I actually liked his book. Then I found he has a couple different Facebook pages. Some are free. He also does law of attraction coaching. So, last summer, I joined the one that you pay. It's like about \$30 a month or so. It's an online group that you're in. He does a lot of coaching. I'm working on goals of losing weight. I'm working on goals of attracting the ideal mate, not just a mate. Because I find guys, but I don't find the right one yet. So, that's what I'm working on. He gives you ideas, actually change up things. That is why I'm wearing a dress, because he said, "Try to do things differently than you normally, typically would." Shake up your energy. One of the big things is decluttering. Because a lot of clutter holds us back from the things that we want because it takes up energy, and sitting — there is a lot of symbolicness to that. So, that's one of the big things I've been doing too. But I'm into meditation too, just paying attention to your energy, eat right, foods that energize you rather than deplete you. Working on issues that energize you, not deplete you. If it starts depleting, you need to sometimes take a break. We all do. [laughter]

PJ: Some of the people who will be listening to this may not know anything about what is happening here with the oil and gas. So, I wonder if you could talk about what you know about that, what you found about it.

EB: There's a lot of stuff going on with the fracking here in the Ohio Valley, in the Wheeling, West Virginia area. I first came to it by actually going to one of your (Fact TV?) meetings, Pat Jacobson, one of your (Fact TV?) meetings ever at your church over there. I heard a little bit about it through TV too. That's what probably prompted me to go to your meeting. Then one day, I was sitting at school at Wheeling Park High School, in the faculty senate meeting. While I was sitting there, they talked about they were going to do a fracking well pad really close to our school, which doesn't have a lot of exit roads and different things. I was like, oh, that doesn't sound good. It just was one of those things that hit you in your stomach. You're just like, I don't think this is a good idea. So, I really was just thinking about it for a couple of days. It took me a couple of days really to figure out, I think I've got to do something about this. You know how you get that inner eye, I think. I've got to do something about this. I think I've got to do something about this, but I really don't know what I'm supposed to do. So, I was at Dorothy Jones' meditation group, and I said something about it. I said, "Oh, this is not good." He or she had some fracking newspapers that we ended up getting other ones too, and handed out, but from Bill Hughes. So, she put me in contact with Bill Hughes. Then Bill Hughes put me in contact with another lady named Christine Bonfili. I met up with Christine Bonfili in a coffee shop, and we talked about ideas of what we needed to do. I think that later that night, Christine started the Facebook page, Stop Fracking Wheeling Park High school. I talked to the principal at school, and the principal at school kind of forewarned me not to do anything with Wheeling Park High School and the name of it, myself, personally. So, that's probably why I was hesitant about starting the Facebook page, but I was highly involved in that Facebook page. We did a lot of letter – we wrote letters to the editor. We talked at city council bill meetings. We talked to people at school. Bill Hughes got a stack of newspapers for us, the fracking information. I forget the name of the paper, but he got a stack of them. I took them up to Wheeling Park and handed them out to people. We took them to farmers' markets. We took them here, there, and everywhere, the library, the city county building, because people really didn't know. What's fracking? They didn't really know what it was. We, at the beginning, either. But there's a lot of harmful effects that it messes up the air, messes up the water, a lot of long-term health impacts for people that we are concerned about, various things that people aren't – general public's not always aware of, unless you look a little deeper into things. Because a lot of times people just see that money. There's money. There's industry. There's people coming to the restaurants. There's people coming to their hotels. They're not thinking about what it's going to do to the water and the air that we're going to have to figure out, and the roads and different things.

PJ: How did that turn out?

EB: Chesapeake pulled it after a lot of public attention to it, to the fact that they were trying to put it by Wheeling Park High School. Chesapeake did pull that one. Then within the next year, GreenHunter was trying to put a fracking waste disposal treatment place up in Warwood. So, we got highly involved in that, stopping that. I recently heard that John Jack was fired – I don't know if you heard that or not – from GreenHunter.

PJ: John Jack is?

EB: John Jack was – I mean, I don't know if he still is or died. This was just what I heard, but I think it's probably true. He was one of the head people with GreenHunter who was giving a lot

of people a lot of seemingly lines of BS [laughter] about what he was doing and what they were doing. It seemed a little suspicious.

PJ: You were involved, I think, also with a group called Wheeling Water Warriors. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

EB: Oh, yes. Wheeling Water Warriors was just basically an offshoot of the Fact TV. Just got pretty active. We did some rallies. We've done a few rallies. We went out and did community outreach activities. We did one up in Warren, Ohio. Actually, I think there's one that Robin's going to this weekend, someplace in Ohio. Because she'd asked me if I would go but too many other things on the agenda. We went around to different places in Wheeling. A couple of times, we had stuff up at the Warwood Garden Park where we had music. We had speakers. We had Doug Shields from Pittsburgh. We had Dr. Ben Stout. We had Dr. Yuri Gorby. We had a lot of good speakers, informational speakers, come and try to put out a lot of information, and try to gather support to get the community to know what's going on, and to work together to make it a better place so that we don't have to stress over whether we're going to have clean water, clean air.

PJ: I would like to hear a little bit more about your driving this eighteen-wheeler?

EB: [laughter] Yes.

PJ: Tell me about this.

EB: That really wasn't my main – I first of all got in with [inaudible] throwing up. My first job was as a personnel administration specialist. That's my main job that I did throughout my six years in the Army Reserve. My secondary MOS, military occupational specialty, was heavy vehicle operator which was the eighteen-wheelers and two-and-a-half-ton trucks, and et cetera. It was a secondary. I did it some. I actually did a couple of convoys over in Saudi Arabia and different stuff, but it wasn't my primary. But it was definitely not my thing that it made me a little too nervous, driving that big, old truck. [laughter] But it was good to experience. Step out of your boundaries and do different things. Push yourself to the limits that you know you can do different things that you may not have if you didn't push yourself to do it, just like basic training. [laughter]

PJ: Do you have any more things that you would like to say, or do you want to take a minute to think?

EB: There's nothing really else too much I can think about. Stepping out of your boundaries is good. Everybody, we all should step out of our boundaries. I actually went ziplining a few years ago, and I was thinking about doing it again, maybe next weekend for the 4th of July. It's good to step out of your boundaries and shake things up in your life instead of just – because we put ourselves in a grind and a routine. We can break out of it at any time we choose to. We just have to do stuff. Sometimes it's by doing something little, will help you to move out of your daily routine and do something different. It's good for you. It's good to be open to things too.

Because I didn't know really what this was about, and I was like, okay, I'll go with it. I'll be open to see what this is about. [laughter]

PJ: What about your work with teenage mothers?

EB: Yes. That is a very rewarding job. It can be hectic, stressful. At this time, I work with teen parents, residential ed kids, which is all the kids throughout the whole county that are in facilities. It would include Crittenden. It would include St. John's Children's Home, Children's Home of Wheeling. There's one called Youth Achievement Center. Then there's Youth Services Assistance's Samaritan House in Helsinki. Because some of the kids, even though Helsinki is in Marshall County, come to Ohio County. So, I keep track of all that. I go to student assistance team meetings. We have a daycare at our school. So, I'm like a liaison with the daycare, just making sure they have all they need, try to check up on the girls and make sure they're coming to school. Because that's a big thing, if they show up, you usually can get them to graduate. It's important for them to graduate because, mainly, they have to take care of their kids. So, it's really important that they graduate one way or another. Whether they do it through the traditional four-year way, or we try to work with them to get them to do the equivalency test if that's their goal. One way or another, we want them to have something when they leave, either way they go. Hopefully, get them the contacts throughout the community for other things that they need, like WIC or medical cards or daycare outside of school. If they did want to go to college, would lead them in the right direction so they know how to do that. We have speakers come in once a month. A lot of times community speakers will come in, like Birth to Three or Head Start or different things, come in and tell about their services. So, they know that they're there for down the road.

PJ: Is there anything you would like to add to any of this? I remember going to all those city council meetings with you, and to the health department and the planning commission and...

EB: Yes, we did a lot of that. But I would say, believe in whatever you're going to do. If you go halfheartedly, there's no sense in going. Go big or stay at home. Either, if you think you're beat, you're beat; and if you think you can do it, you can do it. It's all up to us. We decide a lot more than we realize that we decide. We have more power than people believe at this point in time. But I think it's common that people realize that we do have more power than a lot of the masses try to think we do. I kind of think that media, generally speaking, I'm not saying all, but the overall view of mainstream media is to keep us in fear and to keep us focusing on one idea while there might be a lot of other things that we really should be focusing on. A lot of old things, I feel like, they will fall to the sides, to include some of the religion because it's fear-based. The end of fear-based stuff is coming. It may just change. I'm not going to say it's going to end because I think there's definitely things that are good about it, the community. But I think the fear-based stuff is about to make its way out. People are figuring out that they don't have to live like that. You get to choose things and make an impact. I think that some of our activities are just as important, not just pertaining to fracking, but a lot of people – we notice, right around the time we did that, there was a lot of other people around in our area who did the same thing, maybe for other causes, but they stepped up and spoke out. They probably thought, well there's Water Warriors about making an impact and getting what they want by speaking up. Maybe we ought to speak up too, instead of just blindly taking what people are giving us. So, the

democracy in action, that part of it's important. Not just the fracking itself, but just saying, "Hey, you can make a difference. Get up and go make a difference on it. You can do it." I think that's what part of it – thing that's really important about it. Stand up and do what you feel like you should do. Also take a rest when – because it can be a lot on you, worrying about things. Back yourself up sometimes and get a break. Have balance. Because when you're working on something and you're frazzled because you're stressed, it's time to back it up because you're not going to be effective. You're effective when you're balanced and you're in harmony with yourself more.

PJ: You mentioned going to Dorothy Jones' meditation classes. When did you come to that idea?

EB: I actually started going to meditation shortly after I came back from Saudi Arabia in about [19]91, [19]92. [laughter]. So, I've been into it pretty young. A lot of times people don't get into that stuff until they're older, but I got into it as soon as I came back from there. Because to tell you the truth, even when I was that at – and I'm all for our country and patriotic and all that. I was in the military. But our government does things that I'm not always on agreement with. I don't know that everything that you're told in the media is accurate. I truly, in my heart of hearts, think a lot of what we were over there for was for the oil. There may have been other things too, like Halliburton's contracts and this, that, and the other. There's probably a whole big thing behind it all, but – I don't even remember where I was going with that. [laughter] But I think people need to question things and look deeper into things. When I came back, I knew that there were things that just felt like that just really was all – people were told one thing, and it really wasn't the same. I don't know, I started questioning things more. That's when I started going to meditation. I was going to A Course in Miracles. It was pretty good too. It was about trying to go more towards your spirit versus your ego, more toward love versus fear and stuff, which everybody – it's a day-to-day thing. Everybody's going through, trying to figure it all out.

PJ: Do you think that your experiences in Saudi Arabia led you to seek out?

EB: I think I was always a spiritual person. Even as a young person, I believed that there was more to things than – nothing personal against the Catholic church, but it was real rote. It was memorize a prayer. It just didn't do it for me. It's fine for other people. If you like it, that's fine. I'm not against it, for other people, but it didn't do as deep of a connection as what I wanted for me. So, I always knew there was something more that I wanted. I always was into – I believed in medium psychics before I went there or anything, and believed in that type stuff. I never had gone to any. Probably within a year when I came back from Saudi Arabia, I went to one. But I always believed that there was more to things. I always believed that you have inner guidance stuff. Because I knew, whenever they were talking about the troop buildup for Saudi Arabia, I knew I was going there. It was funny because my brother and I were both in the military at the same time. His unit didn't go, but my unit did. So, I don't know. I knew I was going, and it was not very long after that we did go. [laughter]

PJ: Is that a younger brother or an older brother?

EB: Yes, I have a younger brother and a younger sister, both. My sister never did get in the military, but my brother did the same type of thing, six years in the reserves. He drove trucks and did carpentry in the military.

PJ: Very nice.

EB: Yes. [laughter]. So, I don't know. I have, let's see, a brother, a sister, and they're both married. Both have kids. That's all I can think of right now. [laughter] I love going to the beach.

PJ: Has your family lived in this area? I mean, how long has your family been here?

EB: My family's been here as long as I know. I really never did a lot of tracing back everything, but they've been around this area for a good while. My immediate family definitely has. I've lived here all my forty-six years. My dad's been here seventy-three, my mom's sixty-eight, whatever. The direct generation right above them was here the whole time too. I don't know about a couple of generations back. I'm sure they probably came from wherever, immigrants or whatever. [inaudible]

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