

PAUL ARCENEUX
Community Gardener - Metairie, LA

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Date: November 6, 2005
Location: Community garden – Metairie, LA
Interviewer: Laura Westbrook, University of New Orleans
Length: 1 hour, 3 minutes
Project: Gulf Coast Foodways Renaissance Project/Hurricane Katrina

[Begin Paul Arceneaux-1]

0:00:00.2

Laura Westbrook: It's Friday morning and I'm out in the community herb garden that's tended by Paul Arceneaux; the interviewer is Laura Westbrook. The garden is on publicly-owned land next to a church and there is a building, a former stable, attached to the garden in which Paul stores his supplies. You said that when you got back here after your evacuation there were about three feet of—what?

0:00:19.1

Paul Arceneaux: There was just trash all over the place. I had a bunch of flats of these four-inch pots that we were planning to bring to Parkway Partners, from whom I get the access to this building, and of course they were everywhere, and since they still had some value to them you couldn't just loop them all up so I've already brought them back, a couple of hundred of them. So you end up having to pick them all up; this pile of gravel was maybe about six inches deep—

0:00:51.1

LW: Spread everywhere?

0:00:51.2

PA: Everywhere.

0:00:51.4

LW: And it was a pile before?

0:00:53.2

PA: Yeah; it was a pile before. It kind of is a pile now.

0:00:56.5

LW: It's a pile again with a lot of little pieces of—

0:00:58.1

PA: There's a lot of trash in it; that pile over there that's been well dug that is chicken manure that I had gotten from one of our vendors at the Crescent City Farmers Market. It was considerably more mounded over before, as there was some water through here. A bench like that had been ruined—and virtually every piece of trash from a six-block radius washed in here, so it seemed, with the exception of my trash can which was gone.

0:01:31.7

LW: I had that experience too.

0:01:33.4

PA: The trash cans were preferred vessels for looters; they could float things from place to place. Whether that happened here I don't know.

0:01:43.2

LW: What have you heard about the quality of the water that was in this area? Are you concerned about, say, the fertilizer and the dirt and those sorts of things?

0:01:54.0

PA: I'm planning to get soil samples. I just haven't got to it yet.

0:01:57.6

LW: There must be a long line of people needing to do that.

0:01:59.6

PA: Well I haven't gotten to find the details to do all of that stuff yet. It's in the planning; it's kind of like eating an elephant. You just have to take a lot of tiny little bites and they don't always line up, but the thing that gives me a pretty good idea is I had—unlike areas that have had bad flood water like around your house—this stuff is still growing. You can see this basil over here was doing well.

0:02:26.8

LW: Yes; in my neighborhood, one of the most otherworldly aspects of what you see is—

0:02:32.4

PA: Let me tell you what it is—it's the lack of color.

0:02:34.7

LW: —yes; everything is that same kind of mud gray, even the air.

0:02:41.4

PA: It's like the *Wizard of Oz* in reverse. When you cross the 17th Street Canal you go through Technicolor to monochrome, and then the quiet too is just—it is surreal; it's like every bad science fiction novel I've ever read.

0:02:58.1

LW: That's a great color comparison. I'll have to remember that.

0:03:00.5

PA: Post-apocalyptic—anyway, when I left all of these beds were filled with basil. I had about 300 head as I call them—flower, I'm not sure. This Thai basil came through all right. I've already cut some basil, given it to friends, a couple of restaurant owners, because it seemed to be doing just fine.

0:03:26.4

LW: Now, which restaurants have you supplied with basil that are open?

0:03:32.5

PA: What I did is on an informal basis right now; “Hey,” you know, “do you need some?”—that type of stuff, because we're just sort of all in the same boat. The people that I've supplied basil to are like [*loud horn sound*]*—there goes that [inaudible due to horn]* again—Gabrielle's owners . . .

0:03:49.8

LW: And they're open now?

0:03:51.1

PA: I don't know; I don't think so. I went by there the other day but—

0:03:54.9

LW: But they still are cooking for themselves.

0:03:55.8

PA: I don't know; I mean I haven't seen them since the storm but that's the kind of people that I used to do things for.

0:03:59.8

LW: Oh okay; I see.

0:04:01.5

PA: Most—most everything went into pestos that I sold at the Farmers Market. All of the beds were filled up about up (with debris) to here and several of these big railroad ties had been picked up and floated into the middle.

0:04:20.7

LW: And you had to move them yourself?

0:04:22.4

PA: Well, with the help of a very strong young friend, which are good things to have. I started nicknaming him Bam-Bam because he could pick these things up and move them over. As you can see, I've been getting these beds set up; I don't have a lot of concern for the soil right now because it was supporting so much life when I got here, but I do intend to have it examined.

Since it will be a while before I can probably do any growing, get anything to a market any time soon, I'll have time to do that. Right now I'm concentrating on getting the physical stuff done.

0:05:03.7

LW: Yes; I've heard that from a number of people—in fact, two people that I spoke with yesterday asked me to say hello to you—Frances Chauvin—

0:05:11.7

PA: Oh she's a sweetheart.

0:05:12.5

LW: Yes, and Henry Amato.

0:05:14.6

PA: I like Henry.

0:05:16.0

LW: Henry is not sure what he's going to do but Frances said that she's been selling at the Baton Rouge Farmers Market and she said she's doing better there than she did here—that she likes the people at the Crescent City Market so she wants to keep going there, but that she's doing really well in Baton Rouge.

0:05:36.2

PA: Well that's a lot of New Orleans people there, too, so you have a bigger market. I've never gone to the Baton Rouge Market but I have heard very good things about it. One thing that's cool in terms of [*distracted by something growing on fence*]—oh, and about the only thing that I have that has flourished is—look on the fence. Those are loofahs, you know, the scrubbers. Those are loofahs: I planted one in that big pot over there, pretty much as a lark, and now I have 12 big and a bunch of little ones.

0:06:09.0

LW: How do they become loofah?

0:06:12.7

PA: They're just a member of the squash family but they get very, very fibrous as they get bigger and then eventually they dry and all the—the flesh goes away and what you have is that fibrous skeleton.

0:06:30.3

LW: So that's a natural process that they go through?

0:06:33.3

PA: That's a natural process that they go through. The loofah is already there; you just have to dry it and let all the flesh—

0:06:37.8

LW: The skin has to come off.

0:06:39.1

—flesh go away.

0:06:41.5

LW: Like—like a nut, the outside comes off?

0:06:42.3

PA: Yeah; almost—yeah and the inside stuff and what's left—you just—what's left is a skeleton basically.

0:06:49.6

LW: Mm-hmmm.

0:06:49.3

PA: I've never really played with them but I did them pretty much as—as a lark. This is a bay leaf tree, by the way.

0:06:55.5

LW: It's gorgeous; I love the bay—

0:06:58.0

PA: And this was filled with marigolds that I use as edible flowers. There's one little bit of basil that's trying to get—a few basil. That's garlic chives over there; so a few things have—have collected. This is more indicative of the kind of trash I had everywhere; it's just a slow process. As you can see, the water kind of picked up a bunch of stuff and slurried it down here.

0:07:32.6

LW: Yeah; and—

0:07:37.9

PA: That is a Lady Banks Rose.

0:07:40.2

LW: Wow.

0:07:40.4

PA: Which is—

0:07:41.6

LW: Oh I bet that's incredible when it's in bloom.

0:07:43.0

PA: It is gorgeous; you've got to come here in May and see it because it has got literally thousands—.

0:07:50.4

LW: And they're the—are they the small pink ones or are those the yellow ones?

0:07:53.0

PA: They're the tiny yellow—they're the tiny yellow and will get filled for about a three-week period.

0:07:58.7

LW: And does the rose make the little beans or is that something else growing with it?

0:08:02.2

PA: That bean is from basically the vine that's probably going to give me all kinds of hell next year because I didn't have time to keep it back.

0:08:11.3

LW: If only delicious things would invade. They never do.

0:08:15.1

PA: No; it's never what you want to grow.

0:08:18.0

Both: [*Laugh*]

0:08:19.1

PA: [observing the dark clouds] This is a good sign; I hope you don't get wet.

0:08:25.6

LW: Yeah; we need it—we need it desperately. I think one of the most dangerous things is all the mold spores that are in the air.

0:08:38.6

PA: Oh yeah.

0:08:39.3

LW: So that needs to get washed out.

0:08:41.6

PA: With all due respect to those folks, notice we still have a very health bee population.

0:08:46.7

LW: Yes.

0:08:45.6

PA: On thing that's a little scary, but I'm seeing it's beginning to come back—when I first started turning over the soil I didn't see a single earthworm. And that kind of scared me because I had pretty healthy soil; no birds, too. I hear a bird singing and that is so nice; you don't hear them very often anymore.

0:09:03.7

LW: It's a mockingbird. Mockingbirds are good luck, I've always heard.

0:09:06.1

PA: Let's hope so—let's hope so.

0:09:07.0

LW: Well do you remember—when I was small, in my neighborhood, we had the little tree frogs and then they disappeared. Then other larger frogs, toady frogs, appeared and then they disappeared and then the moss started to disappear. If we lose earthworms this time—

0:09:39.9

PA: Well, they're beginning to come back but I'm sure first the flood, and then the drought, kind of—

0:09:53.4

LW: They were hard to handle—.

0:09:55.0

PA: As I'm getting these beds hydrated, you will see—I'm beginning to see a few more as I turn them over. Of course, my Roto-tiller was under three-feet of water so I'm doing all this by hand

right now. You can see where I had to do repairs on—this had floated all the way over here; that one over there had floated up over there. I think the flood waters came this way though, because the trash came this way; it was a lot more rosemary here. I've had some severe die-back here and quite frankly I just—

0:10:32.6

LW: [*pointing to a small live plant*] This one here is doing a little better for now.

0:10:35.9

PA: I just haven't had time to get—this is what basically all of the beds looked like. This is something called choke vine and it does a very adequate job of its description.

0:10:47.0

LW: Lives up to its name.

0:10:49.8

PA: But this needs to come back but I've got—I'm spending my time on getting beds ready so I can get some things in. Like this bed right here, I planted my first seeds yesterday. I planted a bit of arugula there so—probably in about three or four weeks we should have something.

0:11:06.1

LW: That sure will feel good, won't it?

0:11:07.8

PA: Yeah; it will.

0:11:08.7

LW: Now, are these two different types of rosemary, or is this one much more choked back than this one?

0:11:14.6

PA: Yes; I think you were right in the second part. Also this is having some severe die-back on it. I may have—I may lose—at one time this whole bed was nothing but rosemary, but slowly but surely they get to an optimum age.

0:11:32.3

LW: [*pulling weeds*] I enjoy this.

0:11:33.9

PA: Well, I got a place for you! [*Laughs*]

0:11:38.5

LW: Wow; this is—this is knotty—

0:11:42.4

PA: Yeah; I'm going to have—I'm going to have to get the lopper in there.

0:11:48.3

LW: Yeah.

0:11:48.9

PA: Let me get this out of the way. Yeah; see we've got some major die-back—I'm going to have to replant some rosemary but I don't go through that—I don't—

0:11:56.9

LW: That's enormous though; I've never seen a plant that's—

0:11:59.4

PA: Well, this is three or four plants.

0:12:01.0

LW: Even so.

0:12:01.3

PA: I'm going to have to replant 'cause rosemary has about a four to five year life span and then it starts drying—dying back regularly I think—at least that's what I've talked to other people about. Adding a month's drought probably didn't help but I finally got sprinklers up and I'm beginning to get this sprinkled on a daily basis. Or this rain is what we need—this is what we really need.

0:12:29.4

LW: Yes.

0:12:35.4

PA: Compost heap got very, very compacted and God knows what got washed through it; that's going to have to be checked too. You're getting an idea of exactly how much trash and weeds have grown up.

0:12:47.2

LW: Yes.

0:12:47.4

PA: This is blackberries by the way.

0:12:50.1

LW: Uh-hm.

0:12:50.6

PA: Once a year this just gets filled with blackberries which is pretty cool.

0:12:57.3

LW: Do you just sell the blackberries or do you—?

0:13:00.8

PA: I sell some, I use some, and actually there's a gentleman—he didn't come in last year but a gentleman who was part of the garden when they planted these—comes and gets them himself. One of the things I was hoping to do this month is, I was planning to get blackberries going down that entire fence. That's one of the things about this storm; not only have I lost two or three months of my normal activity, but it's slowed me down in projects—new product projects, getting this built through to give me a little bit more money in the spring because I can sell every blackberry.

0:13:41.8

LW: Yes.

0:13:42.3

PA: So there's been a bunch of that; anyway more of the same here. A lot more floating around—the water was obviously much higher here because I've had to pick out almost all of this. These little beds were in basil cultivation as well and of course it was a whole matter of getting all the old stuff up and then getting it turned over, but these—maybe in another two days

of turning over we'll be ready to plant again. Mint in this bed—of course it was a lot—it died back without the water but it's beginning to come back, and with some judicious clearing this should be a mint bed again.

0:14:46.9

LW: Mint is very cheering in that way; it's so determined.

0:14:50.2

PA: You keep it wet it's going to keep coming for you.

0:14:54.9

LW: When did you get started gardening? Has a green thumb always been in your family?

0:15:04.2

PA: Not really and, oddly, I started this as a cook. I started going to the Crescent City Farmers Market because I liked to cook things, and I like fresh ingredients, and in the process I made friends with Jane Greene who had a similar pesto business out of this garden. We struck up a friendship and sooner or later [*gestures toward garden*]—I'm going to keep you here just for the help!

0:15:30.8

LW: This feels good; it feels good to—.

0:15:34.9

PA: I guess you don't have a yard—a yard to work in yourself?

0:15:36.2

LW: No.

0:15:36.2

PA: I guess that's got to hurt.

0:15:38.8

LW: Yes, in fact we had been just considering putting in the underground watering system and I'm so glad we did not get around to doing that.

0:15:49.5

PA: So many during his hurricane, you know you—you end up—saying well thank God; it could have been so much worse if—.

0:15:58.2

LW: Yes.

0:15:59.0

PA: In fact, on a personal note, my mother passed away the Tuesday before the hurricane.

0:16:04.9

LW: Oh; well had—had you had the funeral and everything or—?

0:16:07.3

PA: My mother gave her body to medical science. We're not really sure of the disposition of it at this point but at least I was there to be with her. It was not unexpected.

0:16:20.7

LW: But still, you didn't have time to kind of process—

0:16:22.9

PA: Well, it kind of kept my mind off of a lot of stuff. And I didn't—I mean if she had still been in the nursing home I would have either done something really stupid, like stayed, or shiver every time I heard a horror story like you know [*referring to stories about residents who died because they were not evacuated from nursing homes*]*—that doesn't necessarily have to get in there [the transcript], but—.*

0:16:42.7

LW: Well no; but I'm sure you have been thinking thank goodness this wasn't the last thing that—the last big experience in her life.

0:16:51.4

PA: You—you end up finding the better parts of tough situations—

0:16:56.1

LW: Yes. Now, you say that cooking is important to you?

0:17:03.9

PA: Yeah; well again this—

0:17:05.6

LW: Was your mom—was that one of the things that she taught you to do?

0:17:06.9

PA: Kind of, but I just sort of picked it up on my own and I was at the market and I hooked up a friendship with Jane Greene, who started asking me, “Well I've got to be out of town this weekend; would you mind working for me?” And then, “Can you help me make some pesto?” and then, before I knew it, I was running the business for her in the summertime when she was out of town and then when she retired I just sort of fell into it. I always kid Richard at the Market; I started off as a shopper and look what happened to me!

0:17:43.4

LW: As long as you've been a customer they're not going to want to let you go.

0:17:44.8

PA: You stay too long they'll build a booth around you, and that's kind of what happened. One of the projects I wanted to reintroduce, that Jane had done for Thanksgiving, was a cranberry sage chutney and it is out of this world. And this—this over there, that was all sage that I was growing—

0:18:12.6

LW: Now is this the silver sage or is it—?

0:18:15.6

PA: Yes; it's a silver sage.

0:18:15.4

LW: It hasn't just become silver?

0:18:17.9

PA: No; I'm pretty sure it's a silver sage. It had a silvery—it's more heat resistant and it's almost as good culinarily. I mean it's a pretty darn good fresh sage.

0:18:29.7

LW: Yeah, I would say.

0:18:29.4

PA: But now these guys came through okay. In fact they're getting new growth, but see those little red roses?

0:18:36.0

LW: Yes; you've got the red ones and then the pink ones.

0:18:38.8

PA: I have some pink ones; the red ones are a climber called Red Cascade and all of these in the last two years have been taken from cuttings.

0:18:50.6

LW: Well that's a pretty excitable plant. You must be treating it well.

0:18:52.9

PA: You can grow it well from cuttings. It will stand up even to my abuse. There—see the extent on the fence over there? That came from a single plant. Admittedly that was about four years ago but—and they make a wonderful tiny little rose.

0:19:13.4

LW: Now they make a wonderful what?

0:19:14.9

PA: Tiny little rose.

0:19:16.1

LW: Oh yes.

0:19:17.7

PA: And I've had people that have used these as edible flowers for garnishes; that next to a piece of chocolate cake is gorgeous.

0:19:23.7

LW: I'll bet.

0:19:24.7

PA: A lot of mint in here and at least one or two places it's coming back. You can see I'm getting it back here, so as long as I keep this cleared. [*gesturing toward large section of sheet metal*] This over here came off of that roof over there.

0:19:42.6

LW: I've heard a lot of stories about flying sheets of metal.

0:19:46.3

PA: I wouldn't have wanted to have been here.

0:19:49.5

LW: No; well what—what was your experience during the storm? When did you hear about it and what plans did you make and did they work?

0:19:58.1

PA: Kind of—we'll go sit down and talk. I just wanted to kind of show you what I've been dealing with. All of these were floated all over and I've put this back and this was in basil cultivation as well. So as you can tell —

0:20:13.3

LW: This has got one brave little bloom—

0:20:15.1

PA: Poor little guy.

0:20:16.8

LW: Come on—come back, guy.

0:20:18.7

PA: Well, it's the wrong time of year for it anyway, but this will be filled with flat-leaf parsley and cilantro plants. Now this is a rosemary that's different from the other rosemary. It's called a prostrate rosemary.

0:20:33.0

LW: Hmm.

0:20:34.5

PA: It has a beautiful little flower when it blooms.

0:20:35.9

LW: [*admiringly*] Yes.

0:20:35.4

PA: It looks like a tiny little orchid. This is not as good a plant culinarily, but the little plants make wonderful little garnishes on that twenty-dollar plate of lamb chops.

0:20:48.7

LW: And now is this the one that—from the name—will be sort of a hanging plant?

0:20:53.9

PA: Yeah; it will—it will grow along the ground, as you can see. It is indeed prostrating and not upright.

0:21:00.4

LW: Yeah; I have a friend, Cynthia Scott, who has just a little plot. She doesn't sell; it's just for her own use. She's on Ponce de Leon where I lived until a few months before the storms. She keeps a gorgeous garden at her house and uses rosemary on her porch as a border plant to trail over—

0:21:29.1

PA: There are some places that you would know that had it like that. The library, I think it was, had some prostrate rosemary as a border plant—

0:21:37.2

LW: That's such a nice idea; I really like utility.

0:21:42.1

PA: Have a seat and then maybe if we're not walking around I can keep a subject train a little bit longer than a few seconds.

0:21:48.4

LW: Well you know this fits my concentration level just right.

0:21:53.7

PA: My wife and I were talking about it this morning; you know we have to start making lists because a thought goes in my head and leaves just as quickly.

0:22:02.0

LW: Yes.

0:22:02.0

PA: And I was delighted to see that thing in the paper; it means I'm not going nuts all by myself [*refers to an article stating that Katrina-related memory loss is common to storm survivors*].

0:22:04.2

LW: On the news last night, the newscasters were publishing a list of things to do and things not to do—medicate yourself but don't take drugs; seek counseling if you need to. And they were talking about symptoms like memory loss—saying that if you're experiencing them don't feel that you're going crazy; everyone else is experiencing them as well. Many times I'll walk into a room and say to myself, “Why did I come in here? What was I looking for?” But, you know, I realize I was doing that before the storm. *[Laughs]*

0:22:46.5

PA: It's a matter of extent, but I find myself—I find myself starting to do—of course there's so many things to be done in here, but I'm finding that if I'm cleaning up the trash over here, and I walk back to get something, all of the sudden the next thing I know I'm pulling out dead basil plants and putting them in the—and I'm like, “Wait a minute; that's not what I was doing!” Admittedly, it's all for the right things—

0:23:10.6

LW: It all needs to be done, but still the system is—is that what's gone?

0:23:16.3

PA: *[Nods]* And I've noted this before—

0:23:17.8

LW: The mental systems.

0:23:18.1

PA: I've noted this with a lot of people. With so much stress, and so much loss, as much damage as this storm did to brick and mortar, what it did to the human nervous systems is just even worse. I've seen sharp words, anger, a lot of stuff that I know is not the—it's just, you know, what you've been through.

0:23:40.8

LW: Yes; and it seems to me that when there is a—a short-term catastrophe people tend to bring out the best in themselves. But then if it just keeps going on, people are really tired of it—even just things like the traffic and you can't get around because all of the emergency vehicles and—

0:24:00.8

PA: It's like you have a humanity battery and it gets really charged up when a lot of stuff needs to be done and—and those batteries are on low right now. **[Laughs]**

0:24:11.3

LW: That's a good description.

0:24:12.4

PA: And you know the—the batteries are on low.

0:24:15.8

LW: Yes.

0:24:17.8

PA: But any—anyway, back to your question about how my experience with the—with the storm, because of my mother's passing, my sister was in town and—

0:24:29.2

LW: Uh-hm; where does she live usually?

0:24:29.7

PA: Wilmington, Delaware.

0:24:33.3

LW: Mmm-hmm.

0:24:33.9

PA: And as I'm sure you remember, on Thursday everybody knew that it was Panama City that was going to get clobbered and on Friday morning I have—in fact, I have a naval observatory hurricane bookmark on the computer, and one of my morning rituals is to see if there is anything out there and check where it's going. Friday morning it still looked fine; my sister and I did several errands together. I handled a few things in the garden and she called about death certificates and all about that, and we had gone out to lunch and came back in, and she talked to her fiancé—now her husband because that has happened in the interim—and he said, “Yeah; I hear the hurricane is coming at you guys.” I didn't think so—and it switched that quickly. And so by morning, I had to get my sister—well, in the morning I looked—and then it's coming right at us. So I went to the—I went to the Saturday market and my sister went into town with my wife who works at the Historic New Orleans Collection—.

0:25:44.4

LW: Oh I've—I've probably met her.

0:25:45.2

PA: Pamela Arceneaux is the Reference Librarian; that's my wife.

0:25:48.6

LW: Oh, yes; she's a keeper.

0:25:53.6

PA: I agree—19, no, 29 years, excuse me; you don't get that for murder in most states, but—

[Laughs]

0:26:02.5

LW: I didn't hear that!

0:26:03.4

PA: Yeah; unfortunately the tape did! No; she's heard me say that on more than one occasion. If I can't play it for a joke I don't want to play it. Anyway, long story short, we just started running around real quickly. I have another cousin in town and last year for Ivan we went to stay with a cousin in Arkansas. Well the decision was made we're not going to Arkansas; we're going

to Meridian—no, not Meridian—Hattiesburg, which got hit pretty bad. So we—a cousin secured lodgings for us at the Ark House of Hattiesburg that she had a lot to do with and since it was empty we had wonderful lodgings and watched the hurricane basically come through and knock trees all over the place. By the second day we realized that we weren't going to get anywhere soon, and we're only in the way, and the only air-conditioning anywhere nearby was in that truck, so by three o'clock on Tuesday we decided to head towards South Georgia where my wife's family lives and we spent the next two and half weeks in Thomasville, Georgia just north of Tallahassee. So that's where we ended up. And then having an internet connection was really important because I could keep an eye out for my friends, and on top of that, I could find out what was going on here. Another interesting thing is I found out how—I found out that my electricity was back on when I called myself every day and my answering machine picked up.

0:27:42.2

LW: Uh-huh; just to check?

0:27:42.9

PA: Yeah; and when the answering machine picked up—okay, we've got power; we can get home. Of course, I didn't know that we didn't have air-conditioning but that's another story. The tower next door whipping wires wiped out the air-conditioning from on top of the building but—. [*Laughs*] Little things in comparison—but that's kind of what we—. Oh, again this clip-cloppy way that I'm—my thought process is going; when I realized what was going on I got my sister to

the airport, and she got one of the last airplanes out because she was planning to stay the following week. So we got her out into the airport and she was calling me on the cell phone regularly, eating market food for lunch [*Laughs*], and—because of course one of the beautiful things about the Farmers Market and these guys aren't just colleagues but they're really friends. I think you're seeing that in your, “Say hello to so and so.”

0:28:42.5

LW: Yes; very much.

0:28:42.8

PA: And the first market back it's going to be as much of a family reunion—

0:28:46.8

LW: Yes; I'm sure it will be.

0:28:48.4

PA: —as it is going to be a business opportunity, although God knows we need both. [*Laughs*]

0:28:52.9

LW: Yeah; now Henry is going to the Gretna Farmers Market too. And he's thinking that it might be—well he's just waiting to see how that works out.

0:29:06.0

PA: Well it's working—I understand it's doing exceedingly well right now because you have very few vendors and I don't know how it's—how it is going to work out. I would certainly like to become—I mean I'm part of the Crescent City Farmers Market; that's how I started. I feel like I'm part of the family and I certainly want it—want it to work; I certainly plan to be there. As you can tell though; I was damaged to the point that I don't have a crop right now. There's not a whole lot I could sell, so I'm basically targeting a January, you know, 2006 comeback, January 2006. By then I will have stuff planted and I should start getting some production going. I might even be able to sell—by then the loofah may be in and I might even be able to sell some of those. But it's going—you know it's going to have to build up slowly, and then it also depends a lot on—I feel a lot like my attorney, whenever I ask him a question he always says, “Well it depends,” and there’s so many answers that I don’t know—we don’t know.

0:30:03.1

LW: I’m wondering—and I think that might be the answer—whether you'll do things differently now because of the storm, because the market has changed or because the ability to

grow certain things may have changed.

0:30:21.0

PA: I don't think that the ability to grow will have changed. I think anything that's going to cause me changing how I do what I do is going to be a change in the market, and that just remains to be seen. What normally I do is I turn the products that I grow into pestos and that's really about ninety-five percent of the business. And I have a set of the pestos that I make—the basil pestos and then I make a cilantro, a parsley, and an arugula pesto for the wintertime. They all have their own aficionados and I can keep a fairly good volume going throughout twelve months out of the year. I don't know what's going to be back there; I don't know who is coming back. I have a certain—you know there's a certain amount of upward mobility and education that's required for the product, because it's a little more obscure and you have to have a little money to drop five or six bucks for a condiment. So, you know, it's like jazz; we're going to make it up as we go along, but I'm determined that I'm going to give it a try and see what happens. Having the luxury of—we found out very early on that the [Historic New Orleans] Collection unlike most of the other cultural institutions is still in operation. Within a week, there was a note from the Board, “You're still employed; don't put in for unemployment,” so we have the benefits, we have the insurance. So I'm probably a bit luckier than some of the more—some of the people because I can afford this much downtime to get my crop back up.

0:32:07.6

LW: Right; to start again, and people will be so appreciative too. What has your experience been since? How long have you been back and who have you been talking to; what are you hearing people expressing as their concerns?

0:32:30.2

PA: Well, we got back into Jefferson Parish on the twenty-first; of course that was—Orleans wasn't open to us yet.

0:32:40.6

LW: That was the—what the “look and leave” day? We did that too, and then accompanied my parents.

0:32:43.9

PA: Yeah; well actually on the twenty-first we got in and got to stay. I live right off of Metairie Road and I didn't have a lick of damage other than two nights without air-conditioning which wasn't pleasant but compared to—that's another thing, and this is again, I don't where this could come in but having as little damage as I have I—I run into almost survivor guilt.

0:33:08.3

LW: Yes, yes; I've had several people apologize to me that their houses weren't also destroyed. I do understand that and I almost feel it when I talk to people who were in my neighborhood who had the same loss as I did, but I'm not showing my grief—I'm not crying publicly or that kind of thing and I almost feel that I need to apologize for that and say, "Now I really am upset," but I'm just not—our family is of good Scotch stock; we don't fall apart in front of people but I really am upset, you know. It's just funny how people respond differently.

0:33:54.6

PA: Well I didn't have to spend three weeks in a shelter worried about—I mean some of the stories that I've heard have been just literally worthy of a book or—or even a theatrical production.

0:34:09.4

LW: I do have a friend who is—he has interviewed people who are Betsy survivors and has done a play using their words, so they're just—here's your friend who has been interviewed and then there's an actor in the play using their exact words, but dramatizing them—

0:34:29.1

PA: A very effective use of that was in something called The Laramie Project.

0:34:33.6

LW: Yes?

0:34:34.6

PA: Which is a wonderful play. I'm also—I'm also sort of this part-time member of the theater community and we get together at Stocker Fontelieu's house or we did get together—Stocker is one of those who lost everything.

0:34:47.0

LW: Yeah; uh-hm—well you know actually I had dinner with Don Marshall the other night and you know he's—he's still teaching a theater class at UNO and he is interested in having his students work on a play about the storm. And we've been talking about the ways to use it—

0:35:05.6

PA: Well, I think if you look into the way that The Laramie Project worked—you don't have to make up a plot; you don't have to do anything. You just have to talk to people and there are days that I wish that I had my little recorder on because I'm talking to people who were in the rescue from, you know, when people weren't in the storm and told stories about being pinned down by

gunfire and I'm not going to go any deeper into it but some of the stories—you don't have to say anything; you just have to get them talking and just get the thing going and the stories will just knock you away—and we are regressing yet again. [*Laughs*]

0:35:43.0

LW: I did a presentation about how we adapt culturally to the weather—way before the storm—and I had four of the players from the *Betsy Project* come and do their vignettes. One of them was a lady in her eighties who said that the story she presents as an actress is almost identical to the experience she had. She portrays this other woman, and she said it's really helpful for her because she gets to talk about what really happened to her, but if she did it as herself it would be too difficult. So she's talking about this experience that's really close to her own; she lost her husband during the storm. She doesn't want to talk about that, but she can play this other woman who had the same thing happen and it's cathartic.

0:36:36.8

PA: Uh-hm; well as a matter of fact, my Betsy memories—I was much younger then; I was here for Betsy but my Betsy memories are mostly humorous, having to do with parking a car under a tree and two other people thinking that that was a good idea, so all three cars got [*makes smashing gesture*]*—*weird stuff. Now, what we were talking about? [*Laughs*]

0:36:59.4

LW: Well, about things that you're hearing people express as what their hopes are for how the City will come back or—?

0:37:10.9

PA: Okay; the—the story that I'm hearing more and more, and I'm also hearing a little bit of pessimism creep in, but I think that has to do with tension and stress and everything else, is that there is a window of opportunity that we have here that we can get—that in many ways this place can be made a lot better. As a personal example, this is the longest period I've ever gone in this garden without seeing a drug deal go by—go down. Usually it's in this area here or right over there and I've—I've become quite invisible to them. You know, "He's just the guy that handles the plants and don't worry about him," but I've seen the deals go down this close—I'm usually separated by a fence, but I've seen the money change hands within ten feet away and they're gone, not likely to come back for some while, so there's some real opportunities. The fear I have right here is that of course this is City property operated by Parkway Partners and given to me to use because I keep it up; well with as little money as the City has, I have a very real fear of this being sold out from under me.

0:38:42.0

[End Paul Arceneaux-1]

[Begin Paul Arceneaux-2]

0:00:00.3

Paul Arceneaux: We're both having a hard time. [*Laughs*]

0:00:04.6

Laura Westbrook: [*Laughs*]

0:00:06.2

PA: This is like an—an interview done by two amnesiacs or something.

0:00:10.7

LW: Well it—I was telling my sister this is like I would imagine—this is somewhat similar to the time immediately after the Crash of the '30s or you know that it's—

0:00:23.3

PA: Yeah.

0:00:23.4

LW: —it's something that everybody is going through together. We don't really know what's going to happen.

0:00:29.2

PA: It's a lot more like that than 09/11 because this was so much more systemic; in fact I got a little upset in Georgia when somebody said—when they heard Mayor—Mayor Nagin's well publicized melt-down, well he ain't no Giuliani. And I said Giuliani dealt with one-tenth of what this man is dealing with.

0:00:49.1

LW: Right, right; and there's no—

0:00:52.0

PA: He had two blocks; we had 80 percent of the City.

0:00:56.4

LW: Yeah; and this is not going to—because it was handled so badly I think this is not going to be a touchstone the way that—that continues to be. I mean there's even [inaudible] 09/11. Well there's a 09/11 every year but it's become really iconic.

0:01:10.7

PA: No, no; this is not one that will—this is not one that we're going to want to remember particularly when Browns—all I can think of is FEMA. What can Brown do for you? Apparently very little [*Laughs*]; but I—and the more and more I hear on that the more outraged I get that his—that his Secretary was telling him look like you're working harder, roll your sleeves up—not work harder, no; look like you're working harder. But there's no need to infuse my somewhat leftist inner-politics to this but it has been a real wake-up call for a lot of things.

0:01:46.2

LW: I hope it has been.

0:01:46.9

PA: But we—we have a—we have a window of opportunity; there is some—there is some concern. This area right here has planned to put a minor FEMA—FEMA trailer park right in this area here of 30 trailers.

0:02:04.2

LW: Will that be for workers?

0:02:05.3

PA: No; I think for people who have been displaced or are waiting to get back into their houses, so I think this will be a good thing.

0:02:10.7

LW: Yes.

0:02:10.4

PA: Of course there's some people in the neighborhood who think it will be a bad thing but—

0:02:15.7

LW: Well do you—have you heard that they're going to try to place people if this does become a FEMA trailer park, will the people who get the trailers be people who were displaced from this neighborhood or just—?

0:02:27.2

PA: We don't—I really don't know that much. I—what I learned was from the front page of the *Times Picayune* when they showed the—the map of where they were putting in the—the trailer park. That's—that's as much as I know and since I hope you don't have any connection with the *Times Picayune*—that's a hell of a place to get your news. **[Laughs]**

0:02:48.3

LW: It is. **[Laughs]** That's—that's what we're reduced to now and—and gossip networks. Have you heard any just really crazy rumors that have been going around?

0:02:55.5

PA: Oh my God; a lot that I got from the web but—from this neighborhood when they were trying to do the mandatory evacuation that the Feds would come in handing—handing you two—two bottles of water, so when you grabbed both bottles of water your hands would be tied up and they'd handcuff you and put you in a—in a helicopter and take you to God knows where. I actually read that as—as a news item. Also that there were—that some of the looting was done by very well organized gangs that would come in during the hurricane—I pictured this James Bond you know **[Mimics Movie Music]**—all right we can get this jewelry store.

0:03:41.1

LW: Yeah; that's—I had in mind you know—do you remember in Dick Tracy you know Prune Face?

0:03:46.7

PA: Yes.

0:03:47.5

LW: You know that—that they had the really well—that all the—all the—all the criminal masterminds knew each other and there was some back room where they have a meeting and all the—all the gang leaders—.

0:03:57.6

PA: Yeah; the hurricane is coming here; we've got to go there, yeah, yeah, exactly like that, yeah.

0:04:01.5

LW: Yeah; so just imagining all the—and I think the rumor I heard was that the heads of a lot of local gangs had all gotten together and they were organized. Now how is—when is that—that kind of runs counter to the whole notion of what a gang is about, but—

0:04:17.1

PA: Well I actually—this—this is not—this is not involved but also I listened to a presentation by two members of the LAPD who were trying to prove that all of the problems that LA had with the Rodney King situation which is being conveniently forgotten in terms of our bout of lawlessness was all the fault of gangs and basically their logic was gangs do a lot of terrible things and they showed a lot of pictures of a lot of terrible things that gangs did, a lot of terrible things happened in the Rodney King riots—[inaudible] it was the gangs that did it. I'm not making this up. *[Laughs]*

0:05:09.3

LW: Uh-huh; A equals B, therefore—. *[Laughs]* Yeah.

0:05:11.5

PA: Yeah; and that was the—the same thing they were saying is that right around [Wilshire] when—even before the—the gangs—now this is almost an urban legend type thing that you can trace—even before the—the—the Rodney King verdict was released that the major gangs got

together and decided how they were going to take advantage of it, and that sounds very similar to the kind of thing that you're hearing. So—so it's almost like—

0:05:38.3

LW: It sure does.

0:05:38.0

PA: —urban folklore and it's the kind of things that people's minds go the same way. Oh I heard that somebody shot a relief worker because he gave him a bottle of water and the water wasn't cold. I've heard several rumors about dead bodies showing up in trunks after the—

0:06:04.5

LW: Hmm; I haven't heard that.

0:06:04.9

PA: —after the hurricane you know and there had been no reported murders, but supposedly somebody knows somebody that there was a body in a trunk in Legion Fields. But when you don't know things the—the rumor network is just unbelievable.

0:06:26.0

LW: Yeah, yeah; well how—of your friends and the people that you see regularly what would your guess be as to the percentage of people who are back, I mean just in a general way?

0:06:40.5

PA: That's hard to tell.

0:06:42.4

LW: Does it seem like most of the people are back or are you—are you still trying to track people down?

0:06:49.4

PA: More and more they're showing up. I saw somebody just yesterday that I hadn't seen in a while and they're beginning to come back in. Where my wife works it's about 99-percent. In Metairie it seems like I don't think there's anybody that I haven't completely lost touch with; of course some people have moved. Some people—but for the most part people are you know right off Metairie Road which they can because you know it's too good of an area not to leave. Around here, 60-percent maybe—maybe 75; I don't know. Some people I know not as really close

friends but I know to sit and have a drink with them and I don't think about them until I see them and then I realize that I haven't seen you before.

0:07:38.0

LW: Yeah, yeah.

0:07:38.1

PA: So I really don't—I really don't know. But at first everybody says well I'm staying; I'm here. I had a wonderful experience; this is—this is a you know—asterisk this one for the—but I talked to a gentleman up here. And he was cleaning out his rental property. He grew up in this neighborhood and it turns out that he lives in Metairie not far from where I live and had just come back after three to four weeks in Tennessee and was talking about all the advantages that with the difference in real estate prices he could have sold his house and bought a much nicer house and bought out his—his mortgage and had a little bit extra. His kids were riding bikes and running in the woods and not playing Nintendo; he could have probably found a job—all of the wonderful things you hear about people and he goes but I'm not from there. I don't live there; I live here and I'm going to give it a shot. But a little bit more of the pessimism is—is now beginning to—to—.

0:08:44.7

LW: Yeah; well there was another story that I think was in the [*Times*] *Picayune* this morning saying that I think it was on the front page of the front section, something like if you've heard rumors about the Government offering tax incentives or tax breaks to local people who are coming back to—to Louisiana—think again—that they're not going to do that. What they're going to do is encourage business to come back with reasoning that people will follow business, but not—there's no thought about what people, you know.

0:09:23.6

PA: Yeah.

0:09:24.7

LW: They may or probably will not be the same people who lived there before and that the notion of community is not something that is—is being brought into the equation at all, so that it's not creating jobs for locals; it's bringing Halliburton in or bringing—bringing people in to do the work and then maybe they'll settle there.

0:09:45.8

PA: Well that has a lot more to do—make—in my mind to make sure that—that—that the Halliburton money gets to Halliburton first but I promised not to get my leftist inner-politics into this. [*Laughs*] Whoops.

0:09:58.6

LW: I didn't. *[Laughs]*

0:09:59.3

PA: Whoops—whoops; but again this is—this is a work in progress. We don't know how it's going to turn out. We don't know and you know the things that we heard initially like a—a tax credit for the first five years—that may not happen but you know maybe some of this will go on. Again, I keep coming up with my attorney's answer; I don't know; it really depends. We really don't know but we have—we have some tremendous opportunities as well as we have challenges. I do think that whether or not the tax incentives aren't given to people or not a lot of the people that were the problem, the drug dealers, the—the—the chronically unemployed, the dependence on the—on the Welfare Estate for one of a better word, there was not that—not that much keeping them here and they're probably in a better situation than they've been to in a long time and I suspect they—a lot of them may stay there, which will give an opportunity for—for example, and I don't know if this would happen—if you would even consider it but Lakeview, it may not—your street may not come back, but maybe one of these wonderful houses would become available. You might start getting a remigration; in fact people—I know of one or two families that left here 30—40 years ago, moved out to St. Bernard Parish which is where the Yatts went to and now they're coming back and staying closer to here. So there may be some—I don't know I'm thinking as a social scientist as I was trained to be and not the—I have an MA in

History by the way but you see what it has me doing. **[Laughs]** It seems—it seems that high and dry ground is to be more of a—or moderately damaged places will be more of a premium and therefore they may—the people better suited to use the—may end up in some of these neighborhoods. By the way, this lady who is walking past here right now, her name is Miss Esther; that's her son and her husband. They have been here forever; she's coming back to her house; she's getting the second person in the double evicted because of not wanting to pay rent but every Tuesday and every Thursday without fail she is out in this four-little block area with a broom and a—and she cleans up this little area right here without fail. In fact, she is one that I saw for the first time today and I had missed her and I hadn't seen her, but I'm glad to see her back and I give her you know basil, rosemary, garbage bags, so that she can continue her own little—and these seem to be—I mean and that's a little microcosm of exactly what I was talking about.

0:13:19.9

LW: Yes.

0:13:21.0

PA: But she's a marvelous little piece of this neighborhood and not everybody knows her name but she just comes in and she picks up and—and cleans up.

0:13:34.7

LW: Now what's going on here right next to where we are? There's the—the gray line buses that are—that seem to keep dropping people off at this Salvation Army—?

0:13:48.8

PA: These—these are people who are getting an opportunity to look at their—at their property on the other side of the canal.

0:13:56.5

LW: So they're—

0:13:56.4

PA: It's like a Disney World tour almost; see I think they're not allowed to get out of the buses. They weren't but they will take them to the address and show—this is the—the last part. I don't know if you remember that the—that members of the—of the lower nine were able to go and at least view their properties and this is where it was leaving from. And they did this last week and I only assume that that's what they're doing this week.

0:14:19.8

LW: Uh-hm; so they—they—

0:14:23.5

PA: These are the people who have seen the worst of the worst.

0:14:23.9

LW: It's been published that they can meet here, so if they can get themselves here then they—
then the gray line buses are taking them across—?

0:14:31.6

PA: They did it all last week and they didn't do it this—during the week and now I see them
up—set up the same way; I'm sure they're doing the same thing.

0:14:39.0

LW: Yeah; I just saw—I mean these—when they came in they were full and the people all got
off and now it looks like they're just dispersing; so.

0:14:44.7

PA: They're dispersing; these are people who got to look at their properties for the first time and that's where the real damage happened. That's where the—the Industrial Canal flooded on the other side of the Canal and that's where all the diethyl-methyl bad stuff is you know—that's where the real devastation hit even worse than Lakeview if that's possible.

0:15:06.4

LW: Yeah; do you know any of the gardeners in that area?

0:15:10.8

PA: No; I don't—no; I don't. I've talked to Mario with Parkway Partners.

0:15:16.9

LW: How does he pronounce his last name?

0:15:21.2

PA: I don't know.

0:15:21.6

LW: I've heard it pronounced a couple different ways and spelled a couple of different ways.

0:15:25.6

PA: It ends a vowel; I know he's Italian and he's always Mario [*Laughs*] you know.

0:15:30.1

LW: Uh-huh. [*Laughs*]

0:15:31.3

PA: But I saw him the other day; he was coming through with a group. In fact he was quite pleased that a lot of gardeners haven't been back yet and the gardens look a lot more like what my garden looked—my garden looked like and you know let's not forget, I'll send you a couple pictures of—of the weeds and everything 'cause this doesn't look all that good but you should have only seen what it looked like.

0:15:54.0

LW: I would love to see what it looked like.

0:15:55.6

PA: No; you wouldn't. [*Laughs*]

0:15:55.7

LW: Sort of.

0:15:56.4

PA: [*Laughs*]

0:15:57.0

LW: I'd love to see what it did look like since it doesn't look that way anymore.

0:16:01.5

PA: But you know and it's—it's just a slow—you can see in fact where the biggest branch down was over there; it was all the way down and you can see that. I'm coming back—.

0:16:17.8

LW: Okay.

0:16:29.5

PA: That came—this by the way are all the branches that I've picked up and moved around and a couple were—unfortunately my little nice rosebush over there had to be cut back considerably because it was—it was all the way on top of that bed, but you know the—for the first two weeks it was basically moving trash around and then I could start—

0:16:51.3

LW: This is a fruit tree is it not?

0:16:52.9

PA: No; I think it's just a trash tree.

0:16:54.8

LW: Just a trash tree? It's so pretty.

0:16:56.4

PA: An [inaudible] of some sort; in fact in all probability it needs to come out because it's just getting in the way of sunlight and—and growing my—these little guys are so pretty.

0:17:09.0

LW: They are.

0:17:09.4

PA: Are you moving back to Lakeview or do you know yet or—?

0:17:13.7

LW: We—we don't know. I'm not sure what's going to happen there, what—if the houses will be just gutted, raised, and—

0:17:26.0

PA: It's back to my—don't know.

0:17:29.5

LW: Yeah; back to that. Well let's see; what else can I ask you about—so we talked about sort of what the—the—what—what the cycle of activity was before the storm sort of with the growing the herbs and making the pesto and marketing at the Farmers Market. Where else did you sell your things?

0:17:53.5

PA: I didn't—I did a little bit of business with restaurants and I did a few other projects. I'd bring cut herbs and edible flowers to the market but 80-percent of what I did because herbs worked in this environment—for one thing it was not something that was easily recognizable. This many beds and tomatoes, I'd have a lot worse chance of—in fact two years ago I had a couple of volunteer vines coming out of my compost heap and they turned out to be cantaloupe vines, and they were getting—just the day before I was going to pick them they disappeared the next day. And a friend of mine put in the prospectus that if anybody in this neighborhood—this neighborhood more than most had—had somebody in need of fresh fruit but I got—I could only be optimistic to a point. I wanted to taste my own cantaloupe. **[Laughs]** I can—I can only go so far on that. What I said when I wrote a little report to Parkway Partners of what I saw—we don't know what we're going to get when we build back New Orleans. We're definitely building back the City; in many ways this could be very different. At this point I refuse to believe that there won't be a place for it—for an itinerant pesto maker like myself. I—I am just going on that—and if the situation that we talked about earlier with this garden doesn't work I do have another alternative where somebody has a—basically vacant lot and told me that I could grow there. So I can—I'm—I'm going to find a way; I've got plans B and C in place. But by the way—and this is

getting into really esoteric, if a bunch of opportunists from out of the State come in and start buying up City property, on a moral basis what makes them any different than looters?

0:19:51.7

LW: Well they're used to be a word for that—carpet baggers.

0:19:54.8

PA: Yeah; but even if they're from here, if the City was not inclined to sell this property before the hurricane, they're taking advantage of a great tragedy for their own personal gain. That's a looter in my book.

0:20:09.1

LW: Well yeah; and you could say that our country is establishing a history for itself with that type of behavior. There's no—there is no larger structure to say this is wrong.

0:20:24.8

PA: Now who's left of the center of politics are showing now? [*Laughs*]

0:20:27.9

LW: [*Laughs*] I make no—no false pretenses about it.

0:20:33.6

PA: Yeah.

0:20:35.5

LW: But and clearly things will be different but you are seeing—well and you're maintaining your relationships with the—with the Market and with Parkway Partners and even with some of the restaurant owners, so—?

0:20:54.0

PA: I haven't seen any of them yet; I certainly intend to.

0:20:57.9

LW: I've asked a few people who had supplied restaurants whether the restaurant had contacted them and said well we plan to open and we want to maintain and everybody has said no; they have not had such a—.

0:21:10.2

PA: It's—it's a matter of time. There are a thousand things to do and as—as a very dear friend of mine said frequently and I've taken it up a number of times it's like eating an elephant. And you can only do it one bite at a time but there are just a hell of a lot of bites and my priority is getting this up and going so that I can have some—you know have some product to sell and then I'm going to worry about where to sell the product and that's—that's all there is to it.

0:21:42.4

LW: That's almost a little—a little blessing that you have because there is an enforced time lag; you're not under pressure right now to find a market for something that's about to go bad. You've—you have to have the time to grow it—

0:21:57.8

PA: Which is a problem that—which is a problem that a lot of our vendors had. I don't know if you're aware of the situation with our dairy.

0:22:11.3

LW: The—the Motet(s)?

0:22:14.8

PA: The Motet(s).

0:22:13.5

LW: I've just heard a little bit about—well I've heard that they're not—like so many that they're not sure whether they're going to continue the business or develop different product lines.

0:22:26.0

PA: Well it also caused a family rift.

0:22:28.2

LW: Yeah; and I have heard—.

0:22:29.1

[End Paul Arceneaux-2]

[Begin Paul Arceneaux-3]

0:00:00.3

Paul Arceneaux: It's how exceedingly thin that little veneer of civilization that we have around us and if something cuts that civilization be it the Rodney King riots, be it a hurricane—whatever, we revert to barbarism incredibly quickly.

0:00:20.1

Laura Westbrook: And—and how much we rely on communication and how we take it for granted when it's really not natural, you know—the informal ways of communicating are but that people could be dropped off in a place and—and completely forgotten about—that the person who does the dropping knows, assumes other people know because they were told to take someone there and then no one knows they're there or that the way that the Police couldn't be and didn't know what was going on and were hearing things from reporters because their phones weren't working or those sorts of things. But you ask what we're going to do with this material and what the Southern Food and Beverage Museum is hoping to do is to create a traveling exhibit that will kind of create a little bit of awareness of—you know there's—there's a lot of attention being given to displaced musicians and artists who are trying to re-establish their careers and the Food and Beverage Museum is wanting to call attention to the people who keep our food traditions alive and the additional difficulties that they're facing now maybe encouraging new markets to grow.

0:01:33.7

PA: I assume you're talking to Poppy Tooker—Slow Foods; she's the local Slow Foods lady.

0:01:38.6

LW: Not yet; they're wanting to focus the first—

0:01:41.8

PA: Well she had a lot of contact with those folks.

0:01:42.5

LW: —wave, yeah; the first wave is going to be people who are associated with the Farmers Market but I'm expecting that—that's sort of a convenient focal point and that then they'll want to expand beyond—beyond that.

0:01:55.9

PA: I've got a picture of myself I—I think—I'm pretty sure I still have it of me in the old days behind the—the thing at the Farmers Market that may be of interest to you.

0:02:07.4

LW: Yes; it would be very much so.

0:02:07.2

PA: And you know so we—we can get and I've got—I will have—I will make available anything you want but I've got copies of my signage and the kinds of things that I did and I honestly don't know what this is going to turn into. It's—it's kind of fun; it's like I'm in a new movie at the front and there are no reviews of it yet, so you really don't know what's going to happen. It's like *Rosemary's Baby*—before everybody told you that *Rosemary's Baby* was the devil. You get to figure it out as you go along. Would you like some water?

0:02:35.5

LW: Yeah; and—.

0:02:38.1

PA: I've got some in the car—in the truck.

0:02:41.3

LW: Oh standing up feels good too.

0:02:43.3

PA: You and I are going to get along—you're noticing that.

0:02:44.3

[End Paul Arceneaux-3]